WORLD / A22
Clinton wins Puerto Rico but Obama closer to nomination

BUSINESS / B1
Peso may stay at 43:$1 in '08, hit 44:$1 in '09

ACROSS / A15
Probe of shabu smuggling in Subic expands

NEWS / A2
Senators say they won't wait forever for JDV

NEWS / A3
Dengue cases up 35% over last year, says DOH

Senators call foreign chambers 'predators'

By Cynthia D. Baluss

THE FOREIGN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE in the country drew unanimous condemnation in the Senate yesterday as "predators and copperbaggers" for allegedly interfering in efforts to bring down local power rates.

"I think it is uncalled for for these people

SENATORS A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, June 3, 2008 ★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 179 P18

GMA, hoarders blamed for soaring rice prices

By Inquirer Mindanao

HUNGRY AND FRUSTRATED, A MAN WHO lined up to buy government-subsidized rice at a "Kadiwan ng Bayan" outlet in Banaybay, Davao del Sur, throws a stone at a streamer bearing the image of President Macapagal-Arroyo

GMA, HOARDERS A11

P65/liter gasoline looms

SILENT PROTEST
Fr. Robert Reyes is not running in protest this time but goes into deep meditation, unmindful of passersby, in front of the Supreme Court building on Padre Faura Street in Manila to dramatize his call for the immediate resolution of the 12-year-old "Mendiola 5" case. (Story on Page A2.)

Oil firms admit no relief for consumers

By Abigail L. Ho and Roneel W. Domingo

CONSUMERS WILL HAVE TO deal with weekly fuel price increases of P1.50 a liter that started on Saturday, as oil firms scramble to recover losses resulting from skyrocketing crude prices in the world market.

Allowing the oil firms to recoup their losses could drive the price of gasoline to a record P65 a liter.

An industry executive said fuel prices could go up by between P6 and P11 a liter to reflect the higher oil prices.

"Under scenarios [the amount that oil firms need to recoup] have soared ... There's really no relief in sight. Consumers will have to bear weekly increases, most likely by P1.50 a liter," the executive said.

Virginia Bañvivir, public affairs manager at oil refiner Petron Corp., said that for diesel alone, the current pump price was P6 a liter lower than the actual imported price of the product.

The hefty fuel price increases are expected to further jack up the prices of almost everything else, making life more difficult for most Filipinos.

Consumer groups yesterday called for the removal of the 12-percent val-

PAYUTER A6

Baguio walks to work, plans 6 carless days a week

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—AN ENERGY-SAVING campaign designed to eventually rid this mountain resort city of cars and other motor vehicles for six days a week began yesterday with a walk.

About 200 local officials, employees and residents walked to work in their shoes to efforts to conserve energy, cut fuel consumption, and protect the environment.

Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr., Baguio Mandato Domogan, Lenny Archbishop Ernesto Salgado, Bishop Carlito Cenzon and other local government officials walked to Burnham Park alongside government workers, teachers and their children for a flag-raising ceremony that launched the "Walk Baguio Walk" energy-saving campaign.

Some showed up wearing their office attire to promote their agencies' programs. The Department of Health's antidengue campaign mover, a giant mosquito, caught everyone's eye at the ceremony held at Athletic Bowl.

Other participants showed up with placards that said: "I am sorry. I walk to work."

They all walked back to their offices after the 10 a.m. ceremony, some for 7 kilometers—in beating weather—and others (who work at the city library) for as short as 35 meters.

Bautista said the city government, having proven that a walk was good

BAGUIO A4

SILVER LINING IN DARK CLOUDS

For some PAF pilots, nothing beats flying mercy missions

By Tarra Quismundo
Journal of Inquirer

THE PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE C-130 barreled through stormy skies and touched down seamlessly on an airstrip surrounded on the twin's map.

A crowd of hungry evacuees applauded as the Hercules ap-

SPECIAL REPORT

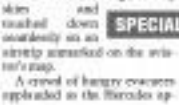
proached, not because it was carrying seven tons of emergency supplies but because it was a rare bird that came to visit Bawangan town in Samar.

"People were clapping because it was the first time they saw a C-130," says Lt. Gen. Pedrito Cadungog, the PAF chief, recounting what Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr., who was on the relief flight, had told him.

Ten days of continuous rains had submerged towns and isolated villages in the province in February, triggering the worst flooding in Samar's history.

Pvt. Maj. Manuel Zumbuena, the man behind the Hercules' wheel, made flights to disaster areas that allow him to serve

FOR SOME A10



Bill seeks snap polls to solve crisis

By TJ Burgonio

IF YOU ARE ABOUT TO "SNAP" over the rising costs of food and fuel, lawmakers suggest a bloodless way out of it.

Members of the House com-

BILL A6

Fashion revolutionary Yves Saint Laurent; 71

SAINT LAURENT

PARIS—FRENCH fashion giant Yves Saint Laurent, one of the great designers of the 20th century who revolutionized women's dress, has died at the age of 71 after a long illness.

Saint Laurent, whose black pantsuits and safari jackets became an icon of women's liberation in the 1960s, died late Sunday of a brain tumor at his Paris home, his former lover and longtime business partner Pierre Berge said.

Saint Laurent had suffered poor mental and physical health for much of his life and had been seriously ill "for a year," Berge told French radio. The funeral will take place on Fri-

FASHION A4

'Educator' weans street kids away from drugs

ON A HUMID SUMMER DAY, street educator Butch Nerja pounds the garbage-littered streets of Divisoria, Manila's chaotic merchant market district, to check on his wards.

He has just received disconcerting news that some of the children he has tried to help have again gone back to living in Divisoria's maze of dark and pungent alleyways where they are prone to drug addiction and abuse.

A self-styled "scholar of the university of hard knocks," the witty and cheerful Nerja, 45, was a street child and gang leader himself with a profound experience of the city's seedy underside.

"We have to check on the whole hacienda," Nerja tells Agence France-Presse, as he heads onto a side street beside a stagnant canal choked with garbage which doubles as a bathing pool for children abandoned or living

EDUCATOR A6

BUTCH Nerja, a former street hustler, drug user and dealer, offers counseling and friendship to street children in Divisoria, Manila.

WEATHER FORECAST

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SUERTRES

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Senate won't wait forever

Talk, solons tell JDV, or else let's have NBN report

By Cynthia D. Balana

TWO SENATORS YESTERDAY CALLED FOR AN end to the ongoing Senate investigation of the controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) deal without waiting for the testimony of Forgotatinan Rep. Jose de Venecia.

Senators Francis Escudero and Richard Gordon said the Senate committees handling the hearings of the anomalous deal—blue ribbon, trade and commerce, defense and national security—should come out with a joint committee report as they could be waiting forever for de Venecia to testify.

The Senate has an open invitation to De Venecia to testify on his knowledge of the bribery-tainted contract between the government and ZTE Corp. of China, particularly on a supposed secret meeting between President Macapagal-Arroyo and ZTE officials in China in November to 2006.

The former Speaker was with the presidential party during that meeting, which included a golf game and lunch.

As a member of Congress, De Venecia cannot be compelled to testify because of inter-chamber courtesy.

But Escudero said he felt that De Venecia had an obligation to let the people know the truth behind the NBN-ZTE project regardless of whether or not that would lead to the downfall of the government.

"Kung gusto gumo Kung ayaw, ayaw. Kung ayaw niya, eh di huwag niya. Kung gusto niya, eh di ayaw niya. Ikaw really wants to (testify) then he will. If he doesn't want to, he won't. If he doesn't want to, never mind. If he wants to, then fine)," Escudero said.

Escudero said he would not try to interpret what De Venecia's shifty-shallying means, but added that "whatever should not be made to wait forever for someone who has not even made up his mind."

He said an initial committee report would be sufficient to lead the senators on what had transpired in the hearings so far.

For his part, Gordon said it was obvious De Venecia had not decided whether to testify or not.

Gordon said that while De Venecia was welcome to appear in the Senate investigation, he should not make the senators wait if he had already decided not to testify.

He said he believed that the opposition was only using the ZTE hearing for political ends.

Malacañang spokesperson Ignacio Bunye yesterday refused to comment on De Venecia's possible testimony at the Senate.

"The President is at this point more concerned with attending to more urgent problems," Bunye said. He said this was why the President was in Aklan to inaugurate a new bridge, and for the rest of the week had various other out-of-town engagements.

Tomorrow, Mr. Arroyo will visit Bulacan, the home turf of De Venecia, to distribute relief goods to residents affected by Typhoon Conson. She will proceed to Baguio City on the same day to meet with Catholic bishops.

Bunye said condemning the impact of the ensuing oil and power prices runs taking up the government's attention.

US, RP top brass meet on terror, etc.

By Nikko Dizon

THE HIGHEST US MILITARY official yesterday renewed his country's support for counter-terrorism efforts of the Philippines and the modernization of its armed forces, Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano said yesterday.

Admiral Michael Mullen, chief of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, paid a courtesy call on Yano at AFP headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, yesterday morning.

They spoke for about half an hour, the AFP Public Information Office said.

"We discussed the support and assistance of the US Armed Forces and the US government, particularly in the capability upgrade and modernization for our Armed Forces, our war against terror, (as well as) the cooperation between the Philippines and the United States," Yano told reporters after his meeting with Mullen.

He described Mullen's visit as "customary for a counterpart." He said this was the second time the head of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff paid a courtesy call on his Philippine counterpart.

Navarro is on the 17th chair of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff on Oct. 1, 2007. Mullen serves as the principal military advisor to the US President, the secretary of defense, the National Security Council and the Homeland Security Council.

No uniforms for public school kids — GMA

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILIGAN, MISAMIS ORIENTAL—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo on Monday directed the Department of Education (DepEd) to drop school uniforms as a requirement in the public schools in a bid to get more kids to enroll this year despite soaring food and fuel prices.

"We want to make it as small a burden as possible on parents to send their children to school. Just like in the United States and in many parts of Europe, we should not require children to wear uniforms," the President said in a speech during the inauguration of a new bridge in Barangay Poblacion, some 10 km south of the municipal town of Iligan.

"We want to make sure that all our children go to school, especially our six-year-olds, because our statistics show that majority of our six-year-olds are at home. They don't go to school," she said.

Reached last night, a staff member at the DepEd Action Center in Pasig City said Education Secretary Jesli Lapus had just issued DepEd Order No. 45 ordering that "students in public elementary and secondary schools are no longer required to wear their school uniforms."

The order aims to "increase the school participation of all school-age children and to remove any financial obstacles to their enrollment in public schools."

Students who already have uniforms can still use them, according to the order.

The President had earlier directed government schools to finance tuition and other school fees to lessen the impact of the higher prices of rice, basic commodities and oil products on parents. She also appealed to private schools to do the same.

29 million students

More than 29 million children are expected to head back to school on June 10 for the start of the new school year.

Mr. Arroyo said the government would continue to invest in social services and infrastructure projects, including health, education, roads, bridges and ports because "physical and human infrastructure remains central to the ability of our nation to break the historic cycle of disease and to prepare to meet the challenges of the future."

The government will spend around P200 billion on infrastructure this year as part of the Medium Term Public Investment Program to upgrade the country's competitiveness and create more jobs, she said.

Bridge to Boracay

The new P346-meter bridge in Barangay Poblacion, Iligan, is the centerpiece of a P1.7-billion, 6-km road-widening project to the coastal highway leading to the port of Caticlan, the jump-off point to the world-famous resort island of Boracay.

The President said the project was in line with her Super Region Plan, which provides for the development of five major regions outside Metro Manila. It was announcing 242 road bridges to be constructed in the country using cash loan of P1 billion and another P360 million in grants from the United Kingdom.

UK Ambassador Peter Hayling-bum, ASEAN Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., Iligan City Councilor Meriflores and his wife, Iligan Mayor Maria Lourdes Miraflores, joined the President in the inauguration rites. PHOTO BY TY DELA PEÑA

PRESIDENT ARROYO raises the first coin over the new Iligan bridge in Mindanao which she inaugurated yesterday with, from left, Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane, ASEAN Ambassador Peter Beckingham, Iligan Mayor Lourdes Miraflores and Rider Rep. Francisco Miraflores. The new twin bridge connects Panay Island to Luzon and Mindanao.

Running priest sits in protest

ACTIVIST PRIEST FR. ROBERT Reyes yesterday held a silent protest in front of the Supreme Court building on Padre Burgos in Manila to call for the speedy and just disposition of the "Ampatuan 57" case.

"I have stood and sat for the last two hours in front of the Supreme Court. What are a few hours of inconvenience compared to the 12 years of detention and imprisonment of the men whose guilt is in serious doubt?" Reyes said in a statement he distributed to reporters.

Reyes said the end plight of the Ampatuan 5 and many others like them illustrated the effects of what the Asian Human Rights Commission of Hong Kong recently referred to as the "Asian Philippine justice system."

The Ampatuan 57 are Quezon City Councilor Ismael de Jesus, his neighbors Leandro Lumanog, Ramonito de Jesus, Cesar Parina and Augusto Santos, who were convicted in 2009 of the ambush-slaying in 1996 of retired Col. Rolando Abadilla, a former military intelligence officer during the Marcos dictatorship who was then vice governor of Ilocos Norte.

Last month, the United Nations Human Rights Committee scolded the Aquino administration of violating the right to a speedy trial of the five convicts.

"Justice has been delayed so far the delay in the disposal of the appeal," the committee said. "More than eight years have passed without the auditors' conviction and the sentence is ultimately a higher tribunal."

In his statement, Reyes said, "Justice delayed is no justice at all. The Chief Justice has shown independence in good judgment." Maryanne C. Ortiz

Hearing set on bringing down cost of texting

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission (NTC) has called telecommunication companies and other stakeholders to a public hearing starting tomorrow to discuss the possibility of reducing the prices of text messages and voice calls.

The main objective of government is really to make communication as affordable or as low-priced as possible," NTC Deputy Commissioner Jorge Sarmiento said in a telephone interview.

The move is to bargain from text messages. "Our estimate is that the price of a regular text message can be lowered to maybe 60 to 65 centavos. We have yet to make an estimate for voice calls. This is something that will be discussed in our public hearings (June 4 and 5) with the telecommunications companies," Sarmiento said.

Sarmiento said the government could not force telecommunications companies to lower their rates. But it wants to engage providers in the effort to make them a little more affordable to help the public cope with the rising cost of food and fuel.

In text circulars signed on May 19, the NTC said it wants to slash the access charge (also known as the interconnection charge) for text messaging between different operators (Smart to Globe, Sun to Smart, etc.) to 15 centavos from 20 centavos. This would put the charge in par with the current 15-centavo access charge for two friends using the same network (Smart to Talk 'n' Text, Globe to TM, Sun to Sun).

The NTC believes this would drive down the price of text messaging from the standard rate of P1 to about 60 or 65 centavos.

As for voice calls, the NTC wants across charges between different providers to go down more moderately but heavy interconnection rates needed to provide telecommunications services. But it wants to engage providers in the effort to make them a little more affordable to help the public cope with the rising cost of food and fuel.

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As for voice calls, the NTC wants across charges between different providers to go down to P1.50 from the current P4.

The Telcos have declined to comment on the specific rates, saying they needed time to study the circulars.

Earlier, telcos expressed concern that making text messaging free could result in abuse and unnecessary network congestion. They also noted that rates in the Philippines were already among the lowest in the world, especially when counting innovative promos like unlimited texting.

RP-wide distribution of P2-B power subsidy urged

By Christine O. Avendaño

DETERMINED TO GRANT A P2-billion power subsidy on the year, the government now wants four million small electricity users nationwide to benefit from a one-time cash dole-out P500 each to help them pay their electricity bills.

This was among the recommendations the Presidential Task Force on Energy will be making to President Macapagal-Arroyo in the contingency plan it is drafting to help the people cope with soaring oil and electricity rates.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that aside from the P2-billion power subsidy the government will give P1 billion in loans and scholarships to poor students in the country.

This as Ermita announced that President Arroyo had already ordered all departments, agencies, government-owned and -controlled corporations and local government units to adopt "as many as possible" electricity and fuel-saving measures and for the savings to "be used as additional rice and emergency loan subsidies for their employees."

"The chair of Philippine National Oil Company Development and Management Corporation and the Department of Budget and Management are requested to jointly monitor this program and report to the President every quarter," said Ms Arroyo's directive which Ermita read before reporters.

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said the task force will propose to President Arroyo that the P2-billion power subsidy for small electricity users be given nationwide, both in the franchise area of Manila Electric Co., as well as areas outside the Meralco franchise area.

Small electricity users are defined lifeline users or those who consume less than 100 kWh of power per month.

"Each small electricity user will be given a cash subsidy of P500 or and done with the electrical expenses that they are incurring because of the increase in electricity prices," Cabral told reporters.

It is the Land Bank of the Philippines and its branches that will serve as the conduit for the cash transfers in the small electricity users in the Meralco franchise areas, while for those in the rural areas, it will be the Rural Electric Cooperatives.

"The implementation of the program will be as soon as possible, as early as the next billing period for those electrical consumption," Cabral said.

Dengue cases up 35% over last year, says DOH

By Kristine L. Alave

THE NUMBER OF DENGUE CASES IN THE country continued to climb, the Department of Health said yesterday, after more than 19,000 cases were recorded in the first five months of the year, a 35 percent rise over the number recorded in the same period last year.

The National Epidemiology Center (NEC) said 19,406 dengue fever cases were recorded nationwide between January and May 2008, up sharply from the 7,992 cases reported in the same period in 2007.

Most of the patients—about 75 percent—were children and young adults, the NEC said.

The NEC said 114 people died from the illness during the period, a big jump from the 60 deaths recorded at the same time last year.

The greatest number of dengue cases occurred in Metro Manila, with 2,589. In the region, the NEC said Caloocan City had most number of dengue victims at 455, while Quezon City following closely with 418.

In Quezon City, however, the local health office said yesterday 568 people were affected with dengue during the period, 10 of whom died.

Dr. Jenee Gealt, chief of the City Health Office's Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit, issued a dengue alert after the number of residents who contracted the mosquito-borne disease doubled in the first five months of the year compared to the same period last year.

Other regions that reported high dengue outbreaks were Central Luzon, 1,586 cases; Central Visayas, 1,394; Calabarzon, 937; and Davao region, 861.

This year, the Department of Health launched 10 anti-dengue campaigns in January, ahead of the rainy season when the mosquito pools, or the trend showed the sharpest increase in the number of cases since last year.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said global warming, which has wreaked havoc on weather patterns, contributed to the rise in dengue cases even during the dry season.

With the beginning of the school year, the health department, along with the Department of Education, is helping schools survey their will be dengue-free. He urged local governments to help clean up the schools to destroy the breeding grounds of dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

With Marlon Ramos

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Senators call foreign chambers 'predators'

By Leila B. Salaverria
Inquirer Research

to be lobbying to us. Enough is enough for foreigners to be meddling in our affairs, meddling in the workings of government, meddling in our political lives, meddling to the discharge of the duties of the elected representatives of the people," Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said.

Enrile's attack on the Senate floor against the chambers of commerce of the United States, Australia-New Zealand, Canada, Japan, Europe and Korea came a day after a joint letter they sent to President Macapagal-Arroyo on May 27 was widely published.

The letter of the group, called the Joint Foreign Chambers (JFC), urged Mr Arroyo to forego the convening of independent power producers' (IPPs') unsolicited moves to amend the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) in an attempt to lower electricity rates.

The JFC said that tinkering with the contracts would be tantamount to investment jolts, saying to build additional power plants or to participate in the government's privatization program in the form of looming shortages.

Enrile, no administration stalwart, asked the Senate to summon all the presidents of foreign chambers in the country and ask them to explain why they did not want the Epira law amended, instead of writing to the President.

"I am for inviting investors to invest in the power sector but not the predators or the carpetbaggers. We are amending it to make it easier for them to come to that very open market where monopolistic tendencies have crept and they can point a finger to the competition," he said.

Enrile also reminded the "foreign guests" that the legislators were among the harshest critics of the big businessmen but the poor household users of electricity in the country.

Bipartisan support

Previously all the senators were unanimous in supporting Enrile's call to summon the JFC officials, agreeing that they had overstepped the limit by interfering in legislative prerogatives such as amending the Epira law.

Sen. Edgardo Angara said the chambers of commerce were actually lobbying for the status quo, which he averred was highly and extensively profitable for them.

He said the JFC allegation that the amendments would adversely affect the industry was "absolutely wrong" because Congress was precisely accelerating open access, or allowing other investors to come into the field.

"By open access, we are allowing competition, which under the present law will prevent [happen]," said Angara. "I think it's just appropriate that these chambers withdraw and apologize to the whole Congress."

JFC presidents to be called

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, chair of the Senate committee on energy and joint congressional power committee, said she would subscribe to handing the Enrile and statements of the JFC representatives.

"They are mere guests in our country. They are welcome guests, but they should not overstay their welcome. They can just make a recommendation, 'please do not touch this bill,' but certainly, no group of foreigners, even if they are investors, can tell the Philippine Congress do not touch that bill," Santiago said.

She told Congress who are thronging the entire Epira law that only certain provisions.

The only problem with the IPPs was the take-or-pay provision which was very onerous to the Filipino taxpayers, she said.

"The foreigners can move their electricity from IPPs with take-or-pay provisions but it should not be a drawback clause to our concerns of the government and the IPPs," she added.

Sen. Jinkoy Ejercito said the JFC move had "brainstormed" and what took place yesterday was a foretaste of what was bound to happen in the Senate hearing on power rates. "If the senators appointed to be unanimously against the position of Foreign Chambers of Commerce, literally everyone has spoken against it. It's a bipartisan issue against the FCC," Ejercito said.

'Importuning' unacceptable'

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel said that JFC's "importunings" of seeking legislative remedies from Malacañang were unacceptable.

"We should not allow our citizens to be humiliated by anyone, regardless of whether they are foreign chambers of commerce of not," Pimentel said.

From Secretary Ignacio Bunye declined to be drawn in the controversy.

"What we're saying is we're calling on our agencies to the discussion that took place in the Senate. Maybe, that should give you an idea of how other leaders feel about the position paper submitted by the joint foreign chambers," Bunye said.

"These investments going on to ensure other needs to be done for us to move forward. But the bottom line, the overall objective of government is to lower the cost of power," he said, adding that "the situation is under consideration."

Moves in the Senate and the House of Representatives to seek lower power rates followed revelations by Winston Garcia, president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), that unrealized "sweetheart deals" between Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) and the IPPs were to blame for high power rates.

Garcia failed to name names of Meralco from the politically influential Lopez family during a senate roundtable meeting last week when reporters were barred the subject of coal irregularities.

Critics said Garcia's move was a result of Mr Arroyo's efforts to muzzle the hostile-owned ABS-CBN network that had taken a tough stance against corruption in government.

The IPPs were encouraged in the 1990s at a time when the country was experiencing an acute power shortage. Meralco accounts for around 40 percent of the nation's electricity consumers.

Take-or-pay provision

Under the take-or-pay provision of the contract between Meralco and its three IPPs, as detailed under Epira and approved by the Energy Regulatory Board (the precursor of the Energy Regulatory Commission), the distribution utility is authorized to pass on to consumers charges for electricity that it is obligated to buy from the IPPs, two which also are owned by the Lopezes, although unrated.

The IPP contracts obligated Meralco to pay the power generators a minimum of around 80 percent of power the IPPs generate to make their operations viable. Consumer demand is variable. Meralco says, and electricity generated cannot be stored but constantly made available to consumers.

National Power Corp. (Napocor) has a similar "take-or-pay" contract with its own IPPs.

The JFC, along with Meralco, contends that removal of this provision would discourage investments in the power sector. Indeed, Meralco wasn't given a franchise to operate in Luzon until 1993 as a result of the Epira.

Some IPPs were engaged in the 1990s at a time when the country was experiencing an acute power shortage. Meralco accounts for around 40 percent of the nation's electricity consumers.

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Bill seeks snap ...

By Leila B. Salaverria
Inquirer Research

nation on suffrage, chaired by Makati City Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr., yesterday unanimously approved House Bill No. 3859 calling for a snap presidential election to solve questions on the mandate of a newly-proclaimed President.

The bill was approved by the committee on local government.

Under the measure, the President shall be elected to a term of six years. However, Locsin said, "in the case of the incumbent President, her term will end upon the calling of a snap election, in which she will be qualified to run for the balance of her term.

"I think that since we have never experienced installing second and current sitting from [usurper of a massive scale, and given the present conditions, let's have this in our account, so that nobody goes out and says, 'Let's go to the streets.' We'll counter it quickly say, 'No, you go to Cocoville," Locsin said.

"I am sure it is hanging there. I don't think it will be approved unless certain actors," he added.

Sharon Kelja Ship, Erlan Inc. Senator Joyce initially filed the bill in February, arguing that a snap election would prevent "opportunists and exactitors" from bringing the country to "tragedy and perfidy."

The bill was in response to street protests calling for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation over the assailed 12.20-million National Broadband Network deal.

With the committee approval, the bill will now be referred to the committee on rules, which will set the date for plenary deliberation.

Bill relevant to times

Locsin said that while the political crisis had erupted out, the bill remained relevant, especially at a time when the public was grappling each day with the problem of deteriorating prices of food and fuel.

"Have [some like] that, all the more is good. From the political crisis, everybody is already thinking of saving money to run for [office]. But something has been greater urgency to life," he said.

"The country has never had [such] current catalyst [faced] from Sangre. It has had total current crisis but a source of personal injustice in the assaults of [Benigno] 'Noynoy' Aquino, a sense of outrage in the conduct of Joseph Estrada, but never on so fundamental an issue as Sangre," he added.

Fashion revolutionary YSL dies; 71

From page A1

Avenue Paris.

The reclusive fashion king retired from haute couture in 2002 after four decades at the top, dumping his French citizenship to become Dutch and making super models such as Amy Bell and Lucinda Gaita to show off his clothes.

Lasting women shoes

French leaders and fashion chiefs hailed Saint Laurent as a fashion revolutionary.

"You set the synergetic moment before your disappearance, the first to elevate haute couture to the rank of art," French President Nicolas Sarkozy said.

"Yves Saint Laurent infused his label with his creative genius, elegant and refined personality, discreet and classic-minded, during a half century of work. In his memory and to keep his name, forever, the most renowned fine luxury awards, necessary luxury for all men and all women," Sarkozy said in a statement.

Saint Laurent is considered one of a handful of designers who dominated 20th century fashion, together with Christian Dior, Coco Chanel and Paul Poiret.

"Yves Saint Laurent reinvented everything, revisited everything, transformed everything in the service of a passion, to let women shine and to love her beauty and sensuality," French Premier, head of the PM fashion empire, said in a statement.

From Oran to Paris

During his farewell in 2002, Saint Laurent said he had "always given the highest importance of all to respect for this craft, which is not exactly an art, but which needs an artist to exist."

Yves Henri Donat Mathieu Saint Laurent was born on Aug. 1, 1936, in Oran, Algeria, where his father worked as a shipping executive. The North African country was then French territory.

A shy, lonely child, he was taunted over his homosexuality and his passion for clothes. When his first retired in 1953 at the age of 17, he already had a solid portfolio of sketches.

Vogue editor Michel de Brunoff became a key supporter of Saint Laurent and published the images. The following year, Saint Laurent won three of the four categories in a design competition in Paris—the Fourth Dimension Wool Secretary Earl Lagerfeld, who is now at Chanel.

Dr Brunoff advised Christian Dior to hire Saint Laurent, who rapidly became his appointed "in the great tradition. At the age of 21, he took over the house when Dior died suddenly three years later.

In 1958, Saint Laurent was called up to fight in the war in Algeria, where an independence war was under way. Less than three weeks later, he was on exemptions on health grounds. When he returned to Paris, however, Dior had already found a replacement for him, Marc Bohan.

With his associate Bergé, Saint Laurent produced his own couture house in 1961. Bergé took care of the business side. Life magazine hailed the first line under his own label as "the best collection of style since Chanel."

Total silence of clothing

Saint Laurent's success lay in the harmony he achieved between body and garment—what he called "the total silence of clothing."

He was also in the right place at the right time. He founded his own couture house at the start of the 1960s when the world was changing and there was a new appetite for originality.

Saint Laurent rode his luck through the rise of the youth market and pop culture that was fueled by the economic boom of the 1960s, as women suddenly had more economic freedom.

His name and the familiar YSL logo became synonymous with all the latest trends, highlighted by the creation of the first Gazelle ready to wear label and perfume, as well as artists licensing deals for accessories and perfumes.

Between the late 1960s and 1970s, Saint Laurent set the pace for fashion around the world, opening up the Japanese market and subsequently expanding to South Korea and Taiwan.

But Saint Laurent's career was not without controversy. In 1971, a collection modelled on the styles of World War II Paris was released. It scored 50 percent on the Richter scale of the 1970s and it perhaps called "Opium" also brought to notoriously that he was continuing drug use.

Astounding versatility

For fellow designer Christian Lacroix, the extent of Saint Laurent's success was his astounding versatility.

"Chanel, Schiaparelli, Balenciaga and Dior all did extraordinary things. But they worked within a particular style," Lacroix said. "Yves Saint Laurent is much more versatile, like a combination of all of them."

Saint Laurent's doing the star stream kept in 1983, when the Metropolitan Museum of Art devoted a show to his work, the first ever to a living designer.

Subsequent shows at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg and in Beijing made him a French national treasure, and he was awarded the Legion d'Honneur in 1985.

When France hosted on the glory of its 1998 World Cup soccer final, it was Saint Laurent who took centre field pre-kick off with an on-field retrospective at the Stade de France. *Reports from AFP and AP*

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The Daily Gospel

Tuesday, June 3, 2008
9th Week in Ordinary Time
Charles Lwanga and Companions

1st Reading: 2 Pt 3:12-15a, 17-18
Gospel: Mk 12:13-17

Some Pharisees and Herodians were sent to Jesus to trap him in what he would say. They came and said to him: "Master, we know that you are true; you are not influenced by anyone, and your manner do not say according to rules, but teaching in truth the way which God's way. Tell us, is it against the law to pay taxes or not? Should we pay them or not?"

But Jesus, who saw through their duplicity, said: "Why are you trying to trap me? Bring me a silver coin and let me see it." They brought him one and Jesus asked, "Whose head is this, and whose name?" They answered, "Caesar's." Then Jesus said, "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." And they were greatly astonished.

Commentary:

"Render to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar and to God the things that are to God." This seems wisdom is what we need in order to make the correct decision when we are not so certain that is the right one. Sometimes, especially in politics, there are no absolutely right or wrong decisions, but only relatively better ones.

St. Augustine would say that we are to live in the world but not be of the world, advice that is perennially useful. It's most likely we are faced more often with decisions that are not clear-cut, but are the relative best of the things of this world.

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Corrections

IN THE MAY 29 ISSUE, Jose L. Sibayan's Viewpoint column on Page A18 of the Opinion section—"Author Interview"—misspelled the name of a cigarette that is popular in Indonesia. The cigarette is called Gudang Garam—not Gudang.

THE SAME COLUMN misspelled the names of two Filipino columnists. They are Carmen "Chitong" Hidalgo—not Hindalgo—and the late epidemiologist Ted Herdilla—not Herdilla.

(Corrections were made by an editor of these errors for the second edition and unfortunately they failed to make the deadline.)

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in articles in the Inquirer to the Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Floor, Philippine Daily Inquirer Bldg., 5 Chino Roces Ave. (formerly Amorsolo St.), Makati City, fax 896-6214, 897-0570, e-mail address inq@inquirer.com.ph

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Baguio walks to work, plans 6 carless days a week

To page A2

for everyone's health, had more ambitious energy-saving plans ahead—including a proposal for a voluntary number coding scheme that would restrict motorists to only a day's use of one of their cars every week.

Closing Session Road

The scheme would cut down the number of motorists that use city roads every day. Up to 20,000 private vehicles, 4,000 public utility jeepneys and 3,200 tamarao ground coy rotate every day.

Barnizo said the government is still needed to convince every resident that walking to work was good for one's health. Before selling them the idea of using public transport instead of their own cars in their city bicycle.

With oil prices soaring higher than expected, Barnizo has ventured a new energy-saving strategy geared toward making services walk.

That would be closing the main downtown street to vehicles and this would start next Monday. Session Road, now a pedestrian strip every weekend, he said.

Electric trams

The city is developing parking spaces where, the mayor said, people who live in and outside the city proper can leave their cars before walking to work, school or shopping mall.

Barnizo said Philippine Sun Investors Inc. (Spain Joseph Barnizo), who has a home here, had told him of Spanish investors interested in developing an electrically powered transit for the city of roughly 300,000 people.

The trams would pass through Session Road, Camp John Hay, Burnham Park, Botanical Garden and Teachers' Camp.

Robert John Bobpepelo, chair of Ed Bearer and Camp John Hay Development Corp., offered a similar project in the late 1990s.

Best reason for walking

Vice Mayor Daniel Fariñas said the city government was serving old energy-saving examples adopted but never fully implemented in part of metropolitan work after Baguio was devastated by the July 1990 killer earthquake.

The measures called for encouraging traffic flows, curbing pollution and adopting household conservation projects to help save energy.

Unlike other cities in the country, driving to save on energy, Barnizo said, distance is perhaps the best reason for motorists to walk to work, according to Setiand Penjaded, Cordillera director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

TO COPE with the spiraling oil crisis, Baguio City officials are urging residents to walk to their workplaces or schools under the "Walk Baguio Walk" program that launched on Monday. | STORY ON PAGE A2

Pendiket yesterday (Indian) cut the Atlantic flood with Philippine Flag lined with indigenous fruit. Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, who chairs that year's Independence Day celebrations.

Environmental pioneers

Yesterday's ceremony chief was the winners of the 10 most-old Baguio Empowering Movement, who promoted environmentalism even before it became fashionable.

They included Salgado, former DENR Cordillera Director Oscar Idemudia, Bilmo and Geodeserio Bonoyo Dipocoy Bonoyo-Banao, Br. Jolly Lalusis and Sharon Dacuay.

Barnizo said global warming and the worst disasters that had hit the country had made the people realize "that there is something very wrong."

He said the weekend road ban is easy to show Baguio "how to make it right."

Sam's message

Sam Lipcosala, an 11-year-old daughter of a city government employee, told the mayor Saturday through Cocaine prepared by Dacuay and was struck by the phrase, "God made Baguio for walking."

"My dad tells us stories about the history of Baguio and during one of his storytelling sessions, he told us that Baguio was declared by [Daniel Hudson] Burnham [in the early 1900s]," Lipcosala said.

"Burnham, he says, designed our city for 25,000 inhabitants. I am guessing that even if Burnham never read the quote, he knew that indeed God made Baguio for walking because my dad never mentioned anything about cars [driving the city in the time]."

She said cars had polluted the city.

"Of course, we can't stop technology and we are not here to advocate the end of walking, but while cars made life easier, it has polluted the city ... I hope that you adults would start showing us you care by leaving your cars home," Lipcosala said.

"My family walks a lot ... Walking keeps my family not only healthier, it also makes us closer," she said.

"Walk with your children ... Walk as we could all conserve fuel and help lessen pollution. Walk so we could have a better environment and clean fresh air. When I was in the car, as Mr. Bilmo impressionally if you walk, you'll be surprised that the people around you are more important than your cars," she said.

₱65/liter gasoline looms; oil firms see no consumer relief

From page A1

as added tax (VAT) on oil products to cushion the impact of high fuel prices.

The flagging slowdown Malacañang (Bayan) said it was not right that the government was enjoying a windfall from VAT collections when consumers "have their backs against the wall in the face of rising inflation."

But the Federation of Philippine Industries said subsidies and watershed pricing schemes were the best way to address the crisis in fuel prices.

Over the weekend, the latest price increase of ₱1.50 a liter brought the price of premium unleaded gasoline to between ₱59.07 and ₱59.15 (Cebu), diesel to between ₱48.50 and ₱50.50.

Since the start of the year, gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices have risen 12 times for a total of ₱9.50 a liter for gasoline, and ₱9.8 a liter for diesel and kerosene.

Too high

Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said the underconsumers that oil companies were getting were too big.

"At current foreign exchange levels, I think ₱11 is just too high. If [taxes were] cut again, then maybe the oil firms will be right. At this point, that rate is too high," he said.

Reyes said diesel was the main source of oil companies' under-recoveries, as they could no longer recover their true investment of the pump due to the nature of the fuel.

Almost all public utility vehicles in the country, especially jeepneys and buses, run on diesel.

"We also had to offset diesel under-recoveries with gasoline, as diesel accounts for more the volume of gasoline demand. At this point, weekly increases will most likely continue. We just don't know for sure how much each increase will be," Reyes said.

Contingency measures

Reyes said a multi-agency task force used for the first time yesterday to discuss contingency measures.

The meeting of the Energy Contingency Task Force had to its agenda projections on when the country would run out of fuel, how would affect the economy, and what steps the government would take to alleviate the impact of high prices to consumers.

"We'll be coming up with diesel-focus, medium-term and long-term plans of action. It's a multi-agency approach. We want all bases covered," Reyes said.

Fluorescent lamps

The Department of Energy, he said, would recommend energy conservation, the shift to compact fluorescent lamps and the conversion of gasoline-fed engines into those that use alternative fuels.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development would discuss the identification of families to be given subsidies for their electricity bills, while the Commission on Higher Education would present plans to encourage loans and scholarships to students.

The government campaign to combat the effects of rising oil prices would also include the smear aggressive revival of the Environment Energy Management Program, which served as a watchdog on how government agencies consumed fuel and electricity.

The departments of Finance and of Budget and management would discuss how the proceeds of the VAT would be allocated to ease the effects of high oil prices.

More urgent

Bayan secretary-general Renato Reyes Jr. said the continued rise in international prices made the scrapping of the VAT on oil "all the more urgent."

"This is the fastest and most direct way of providing relief to consumers, especially since the VAT that consumers pay gets bigger as oil prices rise," Reyes said. "So far, from the 12-percent VAT increases, paying that has become all the more urgent."

Even from the Senate and from its Bulan'ON campaign, show that by every ₱1 per liter increase in the oil price, the national government collects an additional ₱5.47 million in excise and VAT.

The group also calls for the lifting of the VAT on electricity, with the aim of lowering power rates.

Revenue from diesel

Rodolfo Rabaya, DOF director, that more than a big part of the additional VAT revenue comes from diesel, which generates ₱2.12 million daily in excise VAT collections for every ₱1 per liter oil price increase.

The group claims that the government also raises an additional ₱1.11 million daily for every ₱1 per liter increase in the price of gasoline; ₱840,000 from kerosene; ₱900,000 million from fuel oil; ₱630,000 from liquefied petroleum gas; and ₱840,000 from other petroleum products.

The group believes that pump prices of various petroleum products can go down by ₱8 to ₱9 per liter if the VAT is removed.

"The incremental stable rise in oil prices has a snowballing effect on other consumer goods and services is certainly timely since schools are opening this month and there is a pending petition for fare hikes from operators of buses and jeepneys," Reyes said.

He said Bonita Rabaya, which was launched two months ago, was embarking on a community-based campaign to gather support.

Lifting of tax opposed

TPI president Jesus Arranza said lifting the VAT on oil would affect the country's revenue generation and its credit ratings.

"If collection of the VAT on oil continues, we can use the revenues to subsidize the cost of diesel for the transportation of goods, for example," Arranza said.

He said manufacturing businesses are more concerned about the impact of rising oil prices on the cost of electricity.

The effect of oil (and) on the cost of production of goods is not as high as that of electricity because oil accounts for only about 8 percent of the country's power generation mix, according to the PTI head.

Socialized LPG pricing

"We suggest that we try implementing a socialized pricing scheme like for LPG," Arranza said.

He said overall increases in LPG prices could be less for households that buy the gas in cylinders of 11 kilograms or smaller.

"A household of five, for example, should not absorb the full force of a ₱1 increase in the price of LPG price," Arranza said.

"Large LPG users should shoulder the bigger part of price hikes since they are able to pass this on to other end-consumers, while households are not able to do," he added.

'Educator' weans street kids away from drugs

To page A2

with their families on the streets.

The light bulb below the metal-lined lantern his unique job description—many of his hundreds of wards also live in the streets, some by themselves, and without any money are forced to beg or steal just to survive.

Others simply vanish after a while. Their little unknowns and their names and faces only remembered in Monja's personal logbook.

A teenage boy raised from the water up and apparently still high from sniffing glue looks up suspiciously but his eyes light up after recognizing Monja with his trademark curly unkempt hair and wearing his usual dark shirt and bright orange trousers.

"Tito (Father) Bulch is here," the boy shouts, and within minutes a horde of rank-conscious youngsters from under the bridge, where they sleep to lodge just inches above the trash.

The boy gives his name only as Francis, and Monja calls him the "guardian of the bridge" who leads the group in collecting recyclable waste for money.

Monja takes Francis by the elbow and leads him into a corner, where he gently admonishes him to stay off drugs and try to return to a shelter for homeless children.

"I will come back for you later to bring food," Monja says, and proceeds to check on another group of teens sleeping on the footpath beside a nearby building.

Nomads in the city

Monja's wards are among the more than 100,000 children estimated by the social welfare department to be living on the streets in some 65 cities and towns across the Philippines.

Of that total, some 70,000 are believed to be in Manila, either alone or living with their families as nomads in pushcarts, according to the social welfare department.

Monja says the number may be even higher, with more and more needy families streaming into Manila hoping for a better life but only to end up homeless. In many cases, the parents drift apart and the children are left on their own.

"These children are very vulnerable to the environment they live in," Monja says. "Some are on drugs, and I try to establish connections with them on a personal level and convince them to get off the streets and turn half-way homes."

Leader of a gang

Monja never knew his parents and was in the care of relatives when he ran away as a child in the 1970s.

Eventually he found himself as leader of a small gang of boys who sold sex to tourists. They all eventually became addicted to drugs, and became fortunes to hotels around Manila's red-light district.

"I did not like to be pampered by my relatives. They always treated me like an outcast, with rules I wanted freedom, so when I was maybe 10 or 12 years old, I ran away," Monja says.

"I enjoyed the streets, travelled a lot. But I also met periods and I later became a priest. Those who were sent to the streets by their mother are protection," he says.

When money dried up, Monja took his gang to the parks, where they hustled for scraps.

Later, he met social workers who convinced him to join a shelter for boys, and a Catholic priest later took him in as a personal assistant and friend.

'I was hard-core'

"It was a tough and difficult life. I came to a point where I was searching for something from the world, a meaning," Monja says. "At first I did not want to go to a shelter. I was hard-core, but I later liked the discipline and the order.

He took special classes that enabled him to enroll in college, where he majored in psychology. He dropped out, however, and married while still young, before returning to the streets as a "street educator" for Child Hope Asia.

He has made these children. There are many home-breaking stories, but there are also success stories," he says, adding that one of the children he has helped is about to graduate from an exclusive university.

"I don't want any rewards. I just want to show others and try to guide them. During my time, I had to fend for myself. So one way others to guide me," he says.

"I was a former street child. I know how it is to live on the streets. I was in conflict with the law often. I was a drug runner, user. But now how I am, just returning the favor to help these kids," he said.

Now a father to a young daughter, Monja says he knows Bonita Rabaya in a modest home near Manila's Quiapo district, where he is well-respected, even by the neighborhood toughs and petty criminals to whom he often advises and helps out with family or with education expenses by raising donations.

The toughest part of the job, he says, keeping to convince the children to abandon the streets, which many consider a huge playground where they are free to break all rules, Monja says.

Moving on

"In many cases they would stay for a few days at a shelter, eating facilities, but run away again, lured by their friends and the drugs," Monja says.

"Some would later approach me and ask to be released, and that is the time you know they are prepared to move on."

Others who are in their early teens are likely to remain on the streets for a long time, he says.

"But what is important is that know you are there for them. They treasure that," Monja says, as he dispenses sweets to the children tagging at his legs. "I can live and die with the thought I have helped."

A glorious looking woman duly smiles at Monja and grasps his hands to press on her forehead, a sign of respect in the Roman Catholic country. The woman used to be under Monja' care, but never has a family of her own.

On another city block, Monja finds a group of kid scavenging as mentioned Tribal, his eyes empty and cheeks hollowed out from days of hunger and scrounging the ground of rotting garbage nearby.

"Tatay Bulch, please take me to a shelter now. I no longer take drugs, and I promise to behave," the boy pleads. Monja hugs him.

Monja promises to come back for the boy who says he does not remember his parents' existence when he is born.

"That is no problem. When they finally say they are ready to leave the streets, it's a long process, but we get there slowly," Monja says. "It is child changes for ways, that's very rewarding for me."

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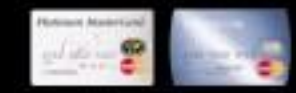

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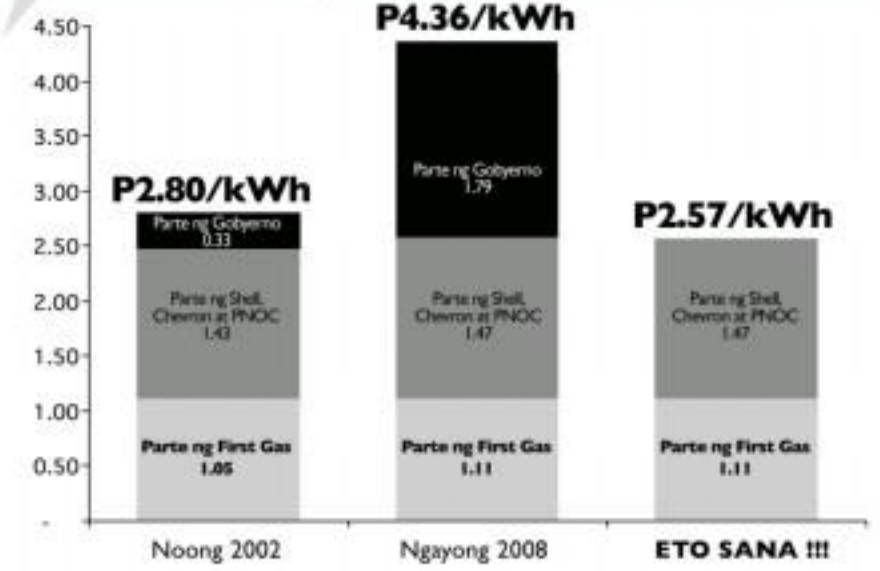

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PAID AD

For some PAF pilots . . .

A newspaper A1

suffering runners are valued keeps him in the here to opts of the fact of better pay in commercial aviation.

Once the pilot two years, more than 100 pilots had left the PAF including some of the finest and brightest now, for greener pastures.

Not Zambrano. Nothing pushes the adrenaline more than flying on missions to places like flood victims on Davao Sunset.

Last week, a C-130 ferried a 30-member Philippine armed contingent on a recovery mission to cyclone-ravaged Burma (Myanmar), along with 12 tons of urgently needed medicines and relief supplies.

"Where will you have a job where you'll be given a chance to do that? Not in the airlines," Zambrano says.

"That's one of the reasons I'm still here. It's very fulfilling.

"When it comes to, we do more in return," the 37-year PAF pilot says. "The military can really help in national development. There's really BIG returns on investment. If only they give us enough funding to keep us stable thing, it will go back to the government. It will go back in the form of disaster response, in national development."

Flight to Yogyakarta

The flight to Davao reminded Zambrano of his mission to Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in May 2006 to ferry aid and 20 medical workers in an earthquake-stricken area.

"I was so touched. They don't know us, but everybody there was hugging us. We're just doing our job but they owe us so lifesavers," he says.

He experienced the same thing in Batangas.

"The people on the airstrip welcomed us. They all wanted to see the aircraft," Zambrano says.

Describing the plane he has grown to love, he says: "It's not a beautiful aircraft. But it's a face that a mother can love ... especially when it is on relief goods."

His crew gamely gave Mercado' base on impromptu 101 on the aircraft, including a briefer on how it worked, capacity and engine power.

Besides the C-130, a PAF rescue chopper helped human officials search for a sub-village that had been isolated by floods for five days.

Maj. Butch Guevara of the PAF's 505th Search and Rescue Group says the commando's Huey 2 was dispatched from Mactan, Cebu, to help bring aid to some 120 families in inundated Sitio Balogo in Barangay Balogo-Igtum.

The choppers also airlifted aid to the towns of Medina and Iligan.

Heartbreaking, fulfilling

"It was both heartbreaking and fulfilling. Once we landed, the children were hugging us. They were really, really hungry and the initial first aid we could give them were huge," Guevara says.

Some flights can be heart-rending. Zambrano piloted the C-130 that airlifted to Manila the bodies of 15 Marines slain in Basilan in August last year.

In Barangay Zambrano and his crew of 10 men flew almost 15,000 lb (roughly seven tons) of rice, canned goods, noodles, mats, mattresses, and clothes on their first flight to Samar on Feb. 20, landing on the narrow airstrip to disaster-hit town.

On board were Teodoro and aid workers.

"Actually, we treated it as an ordinary mission. But having VIPs as passengers, DND (Secretary of National Defense Teodoro) who is also a pilot and his aides who are all pilots, there was pressure. You have to fly them for the first time and there's the pressure because you have to impress your passengers," Zambrano says.

Nothing but airstrip

Bad weather rendered the dirt runway on the PAF's maiden flight to the airstrip, a stretch of pavement strong enough for the military plane to land but unequipped with navigation aids. The airstrip, constructed in the 1980s and has since been used only by private aircraft, sits lacks compared a passenger terminal.

Making do with what was there, the PAF's crew had no option but to just park the plane on the runway itself.

Zambrano had to slow down to ease turbulence, extending by 10 minutes a flight that was supposed to take an hour and 45 minutes. The PAF's second flight the next day experienced even worse turbulence, but Zambrano's earlier flight helped him navigate to find reference on his return.

The second load consisted closer to 30 tons of relief goods to Barangay, and packs later distributed to affected towns. The C-130 could carry more, Zambrano says, but the load was the maximum weight the Bongao runway could take during touchdown.

A bit sentimental

"When we were there, military personnel could not help but be a bit sentimental and we felt that is the better mission, that is the better operation that we handle. We're not fighting our brothers but helping our brothers," he says.

"We feel that if only we were not busy fighting our other side, we can cooperate our disaster response because the money that we're using to fight them can be diverted to our disaster operations."

▲ PHILIPPINE Air Force C-130 plane takes off with a 20-member Philippine medical team on board for cyclone-stricken Burma (Myanmar) from Villamor Air Base as President Macapagal-Arroyo (left) and other top officials wave goodbye. ►

NFA to sell mid-price in 3 Mindanao cities

By Rea T. Olchondra

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) is replicating in three cities in Mindanao and other urban centers in the country its strategy of distributing rice to Metro Manila to curb speculative retail pricing.

"We know that speculation plays a role in setting the retail price, when the price of [rice] goes up or when we import that is the night or typhoon affected harvests, retailers may think about raising prices," NFA spokesperson Rui Efe reported said.

Sen. Loren Legarda warned of a humanitarian crisis in Mindanao as the urged the government to ensure that vegetable distribution of rice in all of the country's regions to stabilize the staple's price nationwide.

Legarda said massive hunger would occur in the region if the price of commercial rice there remained between P40 and P50 a kilo.

"It's possible that too big a portion of the rice produced in Mindanao is being shipped to Luzon and the Visayas, thus leaving almost nothing for Mindanaoans," she said.

Legarda noted that commercial rice, which is selling in the P39-range in Luzon, was expected to go up to P51 a kilo in Mindanao.

To counter speculative pricing, the NFA administrator initially ordered that mid-priced rice, which is sold at P25 per kilo, be distributed in the cities of Davao, General Santos and Cagayan de Oro.

Naisip mo na ba kung gaano kasakit matulog at gumising na mag-isa?
6 out of 10 women can be victims of Human Papillomavirus or HPV na pwedeng maka-cause ng cervical cancer. Each day, 10 women die of cervical cancer in the Philippines. That can mean 10 new widowers everyday. May pwede ka pang gawin. A cervical cancer screening can save your life. Ask your doctor today.
www.mahalagaka.com
Cancer Institute Foundation, Inc.

ed rice GMA, hoarders blamed for soaring rice prices

By Inquirer.Net

The unidentified man was among those who queued early yesterday morning, most of them midnight breakfast, only to be told that the rice would open at 2 p.m.

Some of the consumers tried to bring down the impasse, which was displayed outside the store, before they trooped to the office of Mayor Belinda Hayes.

More and more people in Pikit have no spring or buy government-subsidized rice, which is sold at P 20.38 a kilo, as the price of "polished" rice soars to levels beyond their reach—P41 to P52.

President Rodrigo Duterte has ordered an investigation into the soaring rice prices, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

Earlier, Mr. Arroyo's deputy spokesperson, Lorelei Fajardo, said the National Food Authority (NFA) would look into the alleged hoarding of rice staple in Mindanao.

A Catholic bishop blamed not only traders, who hoard and resell cheap rice, but also government officials, who fail to stop the illegal practice, for the runaway prices of the grain.

Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez of Marbel, South Cotabato, said he had been receiving reports that some traders in Mindanao were rebagging the cheap NFA rice and reselling it at a much higher price.

"We are producing rice, but why is it so expensive? Something is wrong. The source of the greed of businessmen and the incompetence of some government people," Gutierrez said in a Radio Veritas interview.

He called hoarding and reselling rice at a higher price "satanic."

The prelate said he would urge the traders to return what they had "stolen" from the poor. If a trader accepts the resolution, "then I will absolve him. I will give him communion," he said.

Traders point to millers

Gutierrez said the rice traders should open their warehouses not only to government inspectors, but also to bishops. The prelate said the bishops' and priests could help in the fair distribution of rice.

Rice traders in Bansalan vowed to take the blame for the price increase, instead, they point to rice millers, who allegedly refuse to process palay (unhulled rice) as they wait for prices to further increase.

This is also what is happening in Davao del Sur, said a big chunk of the rice supply from Cotabato and Bukidnon was brought to Davao, where the selling price is higher than that in the other parts of Mindanao.

In Davao, premium rice is bought from traders at P2,000 a sack while the selling price in Southern Mindanao ranges from P1,700 to P1,800 a sack.

As a result, many traders are forced to buy rice from suppliers based on the Davao selling price.

But it's a different case in Cotabato City, where a dealer (who asked not to be named) claimed that dealers in the nearby provinces of Sharriff Kabuntalan and South Cotabato were buying rice at a higher price.

P50 per sack

"The dealers sent for the truck of the supplier from Lebak on the highway in North Cotabato. They would add P50 per sack to our original buying price so the supplier would cover his deliveries," the dealer said.

It takes five to six hours to transport the trucks by land from Lebak in Sultan Kudarat to Cotabato City.

"We compete with other dealers from other provinces who go directly to rice suppliers to ensure supply," the rice trader said.

"We used to just sit in our store and wait for the deliveries ... (but now) we are to have suppliers we have to go there because others (traders) are going there," the dealer said.

He said this was one reason the price was continuing to rise.

At the Cotabato City Megamarket, the "cheapest" rice that was spilled on the floor during transport) used to cost P35 a kilo. It now costs P38.

"Farmers" he said as rumor level before the price of rice started to go up, it is now out of touch.

"It has come from the bottom. The government should act and should act quickly," Bandasa Asamiarie, a member of them, said.

In Agusan del Sur, rice traders blamed their counterparts in Digos City for buying most of their rice stocks two weeks ago and reselling them at a much higher price late last week, when their stocks started to run out.

Buy low, sell high

A rice trader in Tandag City in Surigao del Sur also blamed the Davao and Cotabato based traders for buying palay at up to P25 a kilo from farmers in neighboring Sur Miguel town, taking the lion's share of the harvest last month.

Concepcion Asuncion, president of a rice traders' group at the Public Shopping Mall in San Francisco town in Agusan del Sur, said several rice traders from Digos bought their stocks at P1,000 a sack and resold them at P2,000 to P2,200 when their stocks were running low.

Asuncion acknowledged that the Digos traders bought 72 sacks of her stocks two weeks ago.

She said her group learned that it had been had when the Davao and Cotabato traders started to sell the group rice last week at P2,000 to P2,200 a sack after their local supply started to run out.

Amid the soaring prices, the NFA is still limiting the amount of its subsidized rice that consumers can buy in public outlets, drawing recurring complaints from consumers who were open to buy the imported rice.

Not enough

Roberta Bombo of Barangay Abagta in San Francisco, said 2 kilos of rice were not enough to feed her four grown-up children.

Bombo said her family started to patronize the NFA rice when it was offered at P 20.38 a few months back. Like her, other consumers who joined a long queue at an NFA outlet yesterday pleaded for an increase of the ration from 2 kilos to 5 a day.

Last week, the agency received 120,000 bags of Vietnam rice, which its Cavite chief, Gerald Pacito Esquivel, said were enough to ensure "no food shortage in the region."

In nearby Barcelo City, Fernando Nuñez, NFA manager in Butuan and Agusan del Norte, told the high prices were due to increased demand because of the coming lean season.

Nuñez said the hoarding seen by rice traders from outside Caraga had dried up the supply and he had not heard about wholesalers supposedly intended for the city.

Spike in prices

A small rice retailer at the Langihon market in Butuan blamed the rice millers and grain wholesalers for the spike in prices.

"The greedy rice millers and wholesalers are responsible for the increases. By controlling the supply, they manipulate the prices," he said.

Nuñez said he had already ordered seizures on the release of rice the NFA was distributing daily from 900 bags to 1,200 to 1,143 accredited outlets.

"We are mitigating the impact of the price hike by increasing the availability of NFA rice to the markets," he said.

At a meeting with Bayan warlords officials, Arthur Tiaza, a project development officer of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, said his office was planning to add 24 outlets to the 93 "Tindahan Natin" stores in Davao del Sur. (Orlando Dinoy, Erwin G. Fernandez, Ala. Gay Rodriguez, Elvis V. Pangan-Bun, Fredulfo A. Cabigdal, Inquirer Mindanao and Aristeo J. Aliso and Michael Lim Ubac in Manila)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Vol. 23 No. 179

OPINION

Circumventing the law

EDITORIAL

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL VILLAR LAST WEEK urged the chamber to draw up guidelines to regulate the growing number of its members endorsing products supposedly for extra income and publicity. We suppose Villar's recommendation is to obviate the possibility that senators doing product endorsements would further tarnish the diminished image of what was once an august and respected institution.

We also endorse the call of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago for the Commission on Elections to rule on the questions of permissory circumventing by prospective candidates, particularly senators, in the guise of nonpartisan advertising and personal advancement. And for this matter, the proper agency should also draw up similar rules governing national officials such as the Vice President and local officials such as the chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority.

Section 80 of the Omnibus Election Code of 1985 makes it unlawful for any person to engage in an election campaign or partisan political activity except during the campaign period. But these senators have found a way to circumvent that law by doing product endorsements.

Villar himself once endorsed Hapee, a toothpaste brand. Lately, he has been appearing in a TV advertisement calling for the protection of the rights of overseas Filipino workers. He said that this was not a product endorsement but a form of public service to help OFWs who are in need of protection. But the effect is the same—the projection of his face and his voice on TV gives publicity to Villar and puts him in the public consciousness two years before the presidential elections of 2010.

Other senators who are endorsing or have endorsed products are Manuel "Mar" Roxas II for Tide detergent, Richard Gordon for Safeguard soap, Pia Wurtzbach for Pascual Care Center for Men, Francis Escudero for Circular health supplement, Francis Pangilinan for Lucky Me Instant Noodles, Loren Legarda for Lucida 126, a skin-whitening agent, and Pia Cayetano for Downy. All of them are possible presidential or vice-presidential candidates in 2010, and the product endorsements give them tremendous publicity advantage over other prospective candidates who have not received (nor consumed) for similar endorsements.

The senators endorsing products may not be violating the letter of the law, but they are certainly violating its spirit. They are also violating the spirit of fair play in politics.

Some say the senators may be endorsing products to earn extra income. Like Senator Santiago, we would tell them: "Give us a break." To start with, all the senators are millionaires. And while their basic salary is only P45,000 a month, they are getting millions in other funds for office expenses, representation, travel and the like.

Senators endorsing certain products could also find themselves facing conflict of interest situations should a Senate committee investigate, for instance, products like Tide, Safeguard, Downy, Circulan or Pascual Care Center for Men. Or what if any of the products they are endorsing would turn out to be substandard or defective? Would that not affect the credibility of the senator-endorser and the Senate as a whole?

The Senate began to lose its gravitas when it was "headed" by actors, comedians, basketball players and some sex-performing stars whose voices are seldom heard in sessions or committee hearings. Now the chamber is further losing its gravitas, with several senators becoming glamorized hucksters for certain products. In the past, one would never see, or even imagine, a Sen. Claro M. Recto, a Lorenzo M. Tañada, a Jose W. Diokno or a Jovito R. Salonga endorsing a soap, a detergent, a health product or a facial care cream. But now there are no ethical rules or even sometimes rules that prevent senators from doing anything that would advance their candidacies even before the election campaign period has started.

A final argument against senators and other national and local officials appearing on product endorsements on TV and on billboards and newspaper is aesthetic: they have no right to inflict their faces and their voices on the suffering public. They will have the right to do so when the campaign period starts—but not until then.

We urge the senators and other officials who are endorsing products to pull out their advertisements now and the Comelec and other government agencies concerned to lay down the rule on product endorsements. 2010 is still two years away—more than enough time for our prospective or her candidates. Everybody will have to obey the law and practice ethics and fair play and not try to beat the gun in the electoral race by resorting to devious means.

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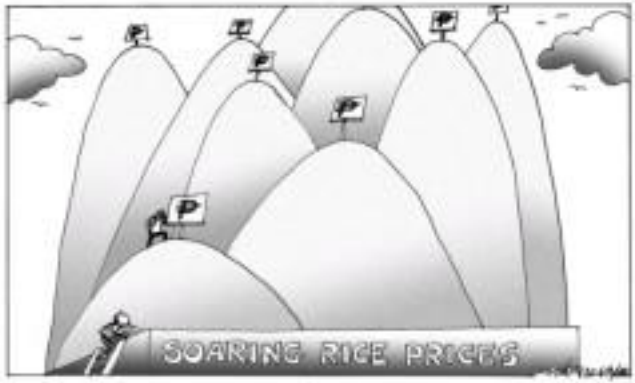

Hair without pain

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"THERE ARE MOTHERS CRYING FOR RISING children, children who once were there and are no more," Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. told the Thirtieth or Extraordinary Millings and Battered Disappearances. And "grandmothers on search lights ironically be rewarded with permanent disappearance of the victim" in a country that resembles Argentina of the "Dirty War."

Intensities like the Summit bring, albeit slowly, accountability to a regime in "total denial," in Interaksyon 101 Special Rapporteur Philip Alston's words. In its credits-like "Typhoons of Lobo Women in Armed Conflict."

"Men may be the combatants," writes University of San Carlos anthropologist Leny Strobel in Philippine Quarterly of Culture & Society. But "women and children continue to be unarmed victims/ ...Not enough is being done to protect them. Only now have we begun to document the problem."

The study analyzes insurgency's impact, over time, on women. It's replayed scenes in three Cebu towns: Danao, Tuburan and Asturias. The long-running insurgency, pervasive poverty and military response could make these Cebu "hot" towns.

"Armed conflict has profound impacts on women's daily lives," the study found. Women found "creative ways to survive and to minimize disruption in their societies." But let the women speak for themselves.

Leonoras and husband Arnold were grinding corn when paramilitary CAFGUs burst around. They beat up Arnold for refusing information on NPA movements. Generosa protested when they took her son Tabusao. "If you insist we have him here, we will kill him first," was the reply.

"If he's an NPA, would he have the softened hands and feet?" Generosa told a Captain Jorge in the camp. Arnold had human rights, she added. "You always see human rights as a means. What if I shoot him?" Generosa replied. "Shoot him, you think nobody will look for him?"

Arnold was rushed to the hospital. To dodge further abuse, they resettled in Mindanao in labanan. They relocated twice. And malaria plagued the whole family. "They tormented ... after three years still haunting the mass suffered by women and children."

Government seeks to win hearts and minds of people. That's the official line. "We talk about democracy," the writer they resist us," the official message held. "But instances of abuse after abuse, by the disciplined troops, persist.

They burned Divina's house even while her husband and son were inside. "But they took the pig that Divina's family was raising to sell and pay for future emergencies," the study reports. "Had we dead, Erlinda, you're dead rising in my care after my daughter and I were interrogated," another said.

"Living with shattered lives and dreams, their survival is a miracle/ ...But these women proved despite all the threats they received," the study adds.

Of 116 study participants, 14 suffered from various illnesses. Nine were afflicted with post-traumatic stress disorder. Marites, Erlinda, Victoria and Tanya both age, midnights, dreaming they heard gunshots. Erlinda and Lolita still trouble when they hear helicopters. Lolita and Divina wouldn't retrieve the "Cultural & Society" transcript. "They no longer wanted to be reminded of what happened."

Cannot as not, "victims of counter-insurgency efforts are perceived as belong to the CPP/NPA while the perpetrators to the AFP," Cristina Montiel of Ateneo de Manila's psychology department told the forum. Improvement must be made to account if we are to "achieve a Philippine state free of armed fighting and respectful of the rule of law."

"Government must develop ways to implement the doctrine of command responsibility/ for human rights abuses, committed under St. Joaquin Bernas, S.J., suggested at the Summit. Congress could draft such a bill and the Supreme Court can set down rules.

Will they listen to the cries of these shattered women? Upon presiding of the military the Philippines refused to sign the Treaty of Rome which explicitly spells out command responsibility. That is a government, Lyotard said, whose "first and last cause is to do nothing and the problem is buried with the last activist."

(E-mail: jmercado@gmail.com)

Truth in advertising

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOME OF THE EXPLANATIONS THE HOSannas who appear to ask offer to justify it are pretty hilarious. There's a whole bunch of them: Danilo Lacson, Ernie Cruz, Richard Gordon, Dadiangas, Pia Cayetano (Granny Tuna's Lobster), Francis Pangilinan (Lucky Me Instant Noodles), Franco Henares (Circulan) and Loren Legarda (Lucida DI, a skin-whitening agent). Last week, Miriam Defensor-Santiago asked the Comelec to look into premature campaigning by candidates in the guise of commercial ads.

For Lacson, the principle is simple: product endorsements are not political endorsements. He says, not without outside humor: "It is within our rights to endorse a product. Maybe there are some who do not want other senators to make endorsements because no one would get them."

Gordon says he's been an advocate of health for so long as he can remember, having been with the Red Cross for 30 years and worked once as branch manager of Procter & Gamble, which produces Safeguard. "The more and even messages of the Safeguard campaign is to teach the general public the benefits of proper hand washing and its importance in preventing the spread of communicable diseases."

And Pia Cayetano: "I personally feel my name is a good name, which is causing sales."

Well, to begin with, himself's can imagine Standard and Elevated counting Mercury and Juan Poster Inside to endorse their products. Then they taken for flushing things down the drain and urging the object of the Lacson exercise off somebody's ass, not necessarily respectively. While at this, Gordon should really not keep calling attention to the benefits of proper hand washing lest the public remember it requires much or way and use only the benefits he has gotten from improperly washing his hands in public. Those are the kinds of ads that make you realize why Philippine legislation is the way it is.

Do these senators realize they're premature campaigning? Probably, though the lines have gotten infinitely more blurred than in Bayani Fernando's case. The senators are at least not on their three years still haunting the mass suffered by women and children. Nine were afflicted with post-traumatic stress disorder. Marites, Erlinda, Victoria and Tanya both age, midnights, dreaming they heard gunshots. Erlinda and Lolita still trouble when they hear helicopters. Lolita and Divina wouldn't retrieve the "Cultural & Society" transcript. "They no longer wanted to be reminded of what happened."

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(E-mail: jmercado@gmail.com)

RP fifth richest in minerals but still so poor

THERE'S AN ALARMING DEVELOPMENT I'VE been noticing on the political scene: the desire of a growing number of leaders to alter the constitutional framework in various parts of the country. What's disturbing is that these leaders are not even secretly nurturing, and it could be that we're a question away from the government and the private sector establishing a Federal Republic of the Philippines. It's there in the letter: it's cited in hope-filled ensuing operations here. After the Supreme Court in 2004 refused to order ruling parties the study of large-scale foreign capital investments, the Arroyo government has since moved to amend and foreign economic development even without prior inquiry in the country. But this hasn't happened, and instead there's pullback in many quarters. So much so that no one often even dared, up-cut mining industry, so that if government has to create a special commission to engage in such dialogue, it should do so.

* * *

For instance, Koronadal Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez has come out openly against large-scale mining projects in Norte Maguindanao and Quirino, saying that it is "inadvisable" for the province to allow the mining of local politicians there. Gutierrez's statement is significant as he was appointed chair of the Regional Development Council in that area two years ago. Bishop Gutierrez, Bishop Nereo Odchimar and Bishop Antonio Tobias Navarro have opposed an energy project that the PHOCAIC proposes to promote more geothermal energy production in the province, according to Fr. Romeo Dayan, but it's not difficult to see where he's coming from in raising projects.

What's not is that an estimated 20 million tons of untapped gold are in Quirino today. For investors, with an annual per capita poverty threshold of nearly P15,000. But the irony is that RP is the fifth most mineral-rich country in the world, with reportedly large reserves of 13 known metallic and 29 non-metallic minerals, and an untapped mineral wealth estimated at about $840 billion. We have 9 million hectares of mineral lands, but only 2 million hectares are being utilized today. The bishops have some valid concerns about the environment, and there's no question that some areas were mismanaged by the reward of a few unscrupulous officials. Among those in the country are the bishops who have to consider how many countries have successfully balanced economic environmental concerns with the urgent need to transform their economies, such as Chile, Australia and Canada.

Government has to reach out to the various opposing sectors and tackle their objections, otherwise our people would be the biggest losers.

* * *

Justice Reinhardt Reynaldo Rancudlot wrote following my column: must there or do per se businesses of the RP mean, in the Executive Secretary and Presidential Human Rights Committee chair Eduardo Ermita as the "universal periodic review" conducted by the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva last April. I said it was a good idea for the RP mean, in terms of the "universal periodic review" level on: it was heading the list. I, on in his own line. He explained that "Task Force 21.1," a.k.a. "Task Force Against Political Violence," created in November 2007, has already issued "considerable accomplishments," meaning the hope that these killings would be "significantly reduced in the coming months."

He pointed out that 2,211 (2?) persons—mostly rural or less likely leaning a sudden acquaint of killing a prisoner and the arrest of another involved in another killing many cases under police investigation, and in three prosecutor's level locally filed in court, including the case of a 17-year-old killed while in police detention three years ago, although only 211 cases have been partially dismissed for lack of evidence or witnesses and now are tried in court, and finally, Mayor Alfredo Antonio, suspect in the murder of a local broadcaster, who voluntarily surrendered after "P 211 pending local police and the case is now in court.

For government to convince many here and abroad that it's not being soft on political violence, nothing substitutes for accomplishments at the street level. This means, as Bishop Gutierrez reminds you to, "to address government's approach."

* * *

I saw will be quite busy for the Universities of the Philippines to its multi-billion economic and infrastructure projects in the Bicol region. Gabriela Silverio and I invited UP "exponential professor" Jose Emilio Rondon to our ALRO Sunday 8 p.m. programme to talk about various economic and progress announced early this huge ambitious. I must say that we would have excited the first UP president himself, Murray Benjamin Bardeen (1911-1992).

On June 16 the UP will give out the Commencement Awards and among those to be honored are all former UP presidents and all UP alumni who are national scientists or artists awardees and all those are dead or living. Among the 12 "UP Centennial Fellows," chosen for their deep commitment to scholarship and the universal values, and their achievements as to growth as a community are Emeritus Professor Alfredo Lagmay, Dean Rodolfo Stoa and The Dave from the Inside, "but to get the "outsider's viewpoint," retired actor UP personalities such as Antonio the Manila panel chairman Fernando Solidum and Business Leader Placido Mapa Jr. (a tip will tell about the UP from their perspective). Twenty-nine distinguished lectures are national and global issues will be delivered at this ceremony, including Dr. Jaime Bulatao, Bel Lamoureux under the "Bridges" Program and former President Fidel Ramos.

* * *

On June 16, 19 and 20 the UP will hold a grand "Centennial Concert" on the "Paramisong Ng Lahi" at the CCP open to all. On June 21 there will be a grand feast-among at all UP alumni at the Sunken Garden. And in the UP Alumni Association's (UPAA) and the December will be the weekend Lantern Parade.

Airport envy

AT LARGE

Rissa Jimenez | Special

"DIANDO" TO PHILIPPINE AIRLINES, PLEASE! The kind supposed to be an already long-share time and scheduled to take off at 8:30 p.m. was delayed for over two hours. The flight delayed for over two hours, we had an entire line to voice the one person in Indiana, window shopping in the various duty-free shops and eating dinner in one of the food outlets. (The airline was kind enough to provide vouchers for dinner.)

I can write a page of merely about some time-consuming experiences, but I can't deny that I enjoy every day life here, that I did nothing but share time in duty. All these events, both chaos and confusion, personalities. But here are some talking points, during the delay, that I think are worth sharing with the "Philippines" to our financial health, with credit card security in mind to help drive consumerism.

But the long wait delayed me at a chance to experience Diosdado Aquino—at the crossing in the lobby of the airport. Aquino, who is currently on trial for the controversial fertilizer fund scam, was also waiting for his flight to Cebu. And as with any other trip abroad, he brought to mind a most depressing reality: the clubbiness of our ruling economic elite in Manila.

Aquino, who is out on bail and dings a certain amount and sudden and will spend, was shoulder-to-shoulder with the airline's biggest in social circles in the world. But while the average guy is subject to endless look-in from the security, a common unaffiliated, no matter who tells you until they are at the boarding or they do not to the airplane. Not for the Hacienderos Nina Lopez.

* * *

THE RACE today is the current status of Nida's to run long and involved to get into here, but a recent decision of the Supreme Court places

'Life is suffering'

NEWSSTAND

John Arcy

THREE YEARS AGO I WAS PART OF A SMALL group of Americans who attended the birthday of a colleague from Sri Lanka with an impromptu party in a hotel room in Austin, Texas. There were lots of beer and food in the days when it was thirsty and we stopped at with the drinking words. He did not celebrate his birthday, he said, although it was good to mark its passage in the company of new friends. For him a suffering.

I understood what he meant. I never meet immigrant things to care about than the passage of time. Indeed, as he explained to me a small the following month: "When you know that life is suffering, you can reduce the dimensions of worrying. You don't celebrate the birthday, because you know that you are one day closer to the aftermath of death and can't do much about it."

Last week he responded to e-mailed passages from our group outlining updates in the situations in the years since we met. He is now 41 and celebrating his birthday. I resigned to make religious statements this time. He can blame the political turmoil as well as the natural disasters battering Asia, the carnage, agony and misery have become the order of the day there. Pick a target, any target: Sri Lanka's civil war between ethnic LTTE (the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) in the north and west coasts with a huge Tamil population and Sinhalese majority; tsunami-related devastation in coastal areas; Burma's military junta's brutal crackdown on monks; Cyclone Nargis's rampage in Burma; and the ongoing power struggles in Pakistan between the military and those civilians in the country. People are more interesting in times of stress to get from hope and remembrance is when those around him are focused to get one big.

* * *

On Sunday, in church, I went to a parish for his first communion celebration. He chose for the theme of the one he spoke in Memphis, Ghana. I remembered that I had heard Emperor Jones speak in Ghana a few days weeks we had exchanged notes on the area, his contributions and in other work.

I accordingly turned when I came, the other of all of Christ discovered these events and shared the memory of the events. "When the natural disasters the forces are made effectively, I don't see how to respond. This may be a little exaggerated, but in the usual manner, and in the hours all ongoing together

Why teach?

"THE MOST DELIGHT OF MEN'S CHARACTER IS HOW. It's true if I stand above the human here. Aside from the fact that you have an excited individual, I will do and not forbid other why I decided to become one of them. Philosophy! I'm confronted with such a question. I simply reply why not?

Personally, I feel bad when people belittle the teaching profession. And it hurts me even more to hear demeaning comments such as "Kawawa naman ang mga teacher," or "you will be destined to poverty," etc. Yes, it's true that it's not a lucrative job. It's not a job to make you financially rich-thing and rewarding one. But despite the discouraging tone of the naysayers, I still love work. I am not discouraged from becoming a teacher. My reasons, though a bit hard to articulate, are not without seriousness and even quite meritorious.

* * *

To begin with, the reason for choosing the profession is quite simple: to ensure my basic needs. To have not my needs but of children nearer them, I will merely do. As time to bring, of course, I need to keep my body and soul together. I need to ensure my body and mind in order to survive and keep my family alive. Without the P1,000 I receive from my salary, I need to have epic dam would provide me a decent income. Whether I will be compensated or like not a month, or more. Although other professions can be more profitable than teaching, I will still go for teaching. The reason is that I don't like to work in other fields. I believe I am capable of rendering genuine helpful of fulfilling services to others.

The second reason why I choose teaching is for my profession is that I want to be safe from chances who take advantage of someone's ignorance. Even people who look down on someone who lack the education of the latter's true character may realize we are because I don't know their completeness.

The third reason that drives me to choose this profession is that the more teachers, scholars and here, considering that they work uncomplainingly, diligently, honestly, are the most loved and respected people in the world. I am convinced that claim statistics are true that capital is easy and the right for help of teachers, people can qualify their status. Teachers are thus loved, for the people, especially the poor who value education, have painted their high hopes on their teachers.

The fourth reason why I want to be a teacher is that you become adequate, competent and confident when you are a teacher. Individuals become adequate because you have successfully imparted what you taught to impart, competent because, in your desire to give the best, you continue to strive to improve your skills and confident because other individuals have validated in them it of success value or them.

People may thank doctors for saving their sicknesses and saving their lives, lawyers for freely rendering their legal services and defending others in litigation. But behind all these people are teachers who taught them the basics, which contain school knowledge, competence and genuine affection, no one of couldn't have doctors, lawyers, etc.

The last reason why I would rather be a teacher than others for being something else is that being can mean that some is in my power to help, and even if I can't change the weak people's lives, to influence them in accomplishing something better: to bring them to the pinnacle of learning, and to mold them into persons who are aware of their potentials.

"Teachers," we are Haim Ginott's words, "must be artists to not be moving recipients from ignorance to enlightenment, from anarchy to cooperation."

* * *

Arvin Antonio Ortiz, 18, is a student of Holy Cross of Davao College

The speech

Chad de Guia

IM TRYING TO THINK ABOUT WHAT IM SUPPOSED TO write. In all honesty, I'm not really sure what to say. The reason is my friend just keep spouting out spinning and, nonsense-pulling gibberish.

Here's the thing. There might ago, my father called me to do him a little favor. He asked me to write a speech for him. It was not really his fault but for my sister. My sister is about to graduate from high school and she is also valedictorian. That's her to give a speech in front of everyone.

I'm not so sure if I'm so cut for the job. I didn't graduate first in my class, I was not always active in school events, and I was not really that much of an achiever. But Dad is proud to say his handsome Thinking-cum-more-than-average-plus-yonder-than-so-much-above-average son is graduating and is now ready to proceed to college. Before all this outburst, I once had a sudden outpouring of pride before this independence and all the responsibilities. I had visionary and daddy-talking sort of things for me. Before I was like a child, I was already little man.

When I was in elementary school, all I cared about, besides maintaining my grades, was my "reputation." Even I had in school built a reputation, a wonderful, something you are known for. I was like the studious and bully because my job in grade school was to be the class president. Yes, I was one. I was like the perfect. The teachers depended on me to keep the class quiet when they were not around. This means, when they're not around. I'm the child here—after the teacher—here boss, and the class president, second boss. It's as if I was given the power to be the boss of the class. Which is compared to my "real" bullies a that I was bothered up to the class officials and, what more my job even outside, by my academicians. There were my place duty in elementary.

High school was a little different. I somehow lost my authoritative ability as a child. I was more interested in being a normal student like an ordinary school while trying to maintain my grades. It was like all my confidence with authoritarian as a boss status. I became the typical student who is happy as my grades were surviving, would be okay. I was no feedback that I became a little indifferent about things. Maybe it was starting to get lazy.

There were the experiences I could not possibly voice down in a valedictory speech. They do not convey pride, honor or joy. They are for those whom the struggle would like to hear from those who is about to graduate with this high-tier honor. I was just not sure whether I was the elementary if I do not wonder why my courtesy is in this status, and a very relaxed student when I was in high school. (Blackening) oh, misdirected). I wonder how does valedictorians voice their valedictory addresses. Is there a formula? Do they memorize how they find for the course? Do they hesitate in finding the right words to say? Do they have to elementary or bland or receptive complete words? Is that even necessary? I have no idea. All I know is that my dad asked me a favor and as my friend Bernie advises, I'm here to help my dad. Death is for those. Love you, Papa. Congratulations, bebe ni.

* * *

Chad de Guia, 18, is a student of the University of the Philippines in Los Baños.

YOUNG BLOOD

Arvin Antonio Ortiz

His secret to know what the young are thinking about. Filled are their thoughts on current issues? Or welcome contributions from the twenty-somethings send them to ...Ed.

Comparison insults our kids

I WOULD LIKE TO REACT TO THE news story titled "Robots on Bicam backburner. Don't trust us like kids," (Inquirer, 5/30/08).

Representatives Lauro Vizconde Chato and Marcia Dalipan are insulting the kids with these comparisons. The kids are a class above their elders in Congress. They are smarter. They don't lie. They don't steal. They bring joy to those around them. I am afraid I cannot say that of the people who populate Congress.

Kids, revolt! Yes, don't elevate the adults to comparison.

Levity aside, this pathetic situation where a congressman himself had to propose to lock the plenary hall at the Batasan after the roll call to force his colleagues to stay and work illustrates the workers-need-our-Congress-to-a-formidable-opposition.

Aren't we Filipinos accustomed that by the end of the current term, Congress (the House of Representatives and Senate combined) shall have spent P9.50 billion or so for the passage of one or two or three bills of substance? OK, let us be generous and say they pass five bills of substance this year. That is P20 billion for every bill, as some often-more-and-more Filipinos are going hungry because of the rice and corn price crises.

Let us abolish Congress and instead bill of the P400 billion every year, for the next 10 years, in that production, the other half we excuse for research on and production of technically-attractive tools for our energy security.

If, after 10 years we are past the present crises and arrive tired and frail (and, wizard), we can have three classes heads in Congress for entertainment.

To be sure, we have quite a few good men and women in Congress—responsible and righteous...doing their job honestly and well. I apologize to them if they feel they are being lumped in the same category as the clowns. That is not intended.

—ERIC LEUTERIO
6, 1000 Sta Ana I.
eelleuterio@yahoo.com

HGC open to loan restructuring; no reply from borrower

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE letter of Jesus L. Balajadia, Observer, 5/27/08).

Balajadia purchased the property referred to through a real estate mortgage loan from PBCPCo-anticipated Bank on the amount of P225,000. The loan was secured by the property identified as BL 18 Lot 22, Goldenville Subdivision, Dasmariñas, Cavite, and annotated in the Home Guaranty Corp. (HGC). When Balajadia defaulted on the payment of his loan amortization with PBCP the bank called on the guaranty of the HGC.

HGC paid PBCP's guarantee claim on Feb. 9, 1999, which the assignment and conveyance of the mortgage rights and interest on the real estate mortgage to HGC. His total outstanding mortgage obligation at the time amounted to around P283,000, incurred of immediately foreclosing on the account. HGC approved the restructuring of Balajadia's account in 1999. He was able to pay his nine monthly amortization to HGC until August 2002. However, he again defaulted on the payment of his loan amortization.

In 2003, we again presented the various restructuring programs offered by HGC to Balajadia. Instead of availing himself of these programs, he requested to avail himself of the benefits under RA 6552, otherwise known as the Maceda Law. We told him that his account was not covered by the Maceda Law, based on the following:

1. The Maceda Law covers sale or financing of real estate on installment payments, wherein the seller commits to transfer ownership of or deliver a real property, and the buyer agrees to pay a price therefor. The parties to this agreement are the buyer and seller. The refund, which the seller is required to make in case of cancellation of the contract to sell, is an incentive built in the Siete Golf Code provision that requires restitution in case of cancellation of contracts.

2. A loan agreement, like the one executed by Balajadia, is different from a contract to sell. The parties herein are the creditor (PBCP, and by virtue of the assignment, HGC) and the borrower (Balajadia) wherein the creditor delivers money to the borrower upon condition that the same amount shall be paid.

3. Balajadia's relationship with HGC/PBCP is that of a borrower. He borrowed money secured by a collateral already registered in his name. He voluntarily thereof to subject to the condition that he will pay the loan.

4. HGC is not a seller or developer but merely a guarantor of the mortgage and indemnified.

On March 6, 2008, Balajadia again requested a restructuring of his loan. We offered various options for the settlement of his loan. However, we have not received any reply from him until today.

—CORAZON L. CORPUS,
vice president,
Corporate Services Group,
Home Guaranty Corporation

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of sources and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Sgipot and Makaraig Streets, City of Makati; or send a fax to 896-6793, 897-8794, or e-mail reader@inquirer.com.ph.

Please indicate in the letter are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number as e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

LETTERS

Refushed issues

"THESE PRE-CLOSED SESSIONS are the ones we condemn and reject it," Sr. senate philosopher an anti-socialist George Simmel term in "Sources in Common Sense" to underscore the importance of learning the lessons of history.

You may be aware of discussions about electronic votes and Mariotti. Unfortunately, the issues that have recently surfaced are merely a rehash of issues that have been put to rest with documentary evidence in 2002.

As we humbly has been alluded to the point in so many ways of late, I feel compelled to write this letter.

Our 2002 reply to the issues against Mariotti and the Angat family that are being circulated by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, among others, is on record.

In particular, it was claimed that control of Meralco passed on to the Marcos-Ramos-Enrile group after a legitimate sale in 1974. Perhaps, most people have forgotten or are too young to remember that my brother Eugenio Lopez Jr was arrested and placed in a military prison in 1972. Hence, all transactions with the Marcos regime were done under duress or "blackmail," which a law one columnist defined "duress." The details of the debtor's machinations and the unjust crimes of Meralco shares to the Lopez family in 1961, or five years after the Edsa Revolution, are also available. We urge the Inquirer to read them thoroughly.

Let us put matters to rest. We remain that in almost 200 years in Philippine business, we have remained true to our heritage of good governance, business excellence and social responsibility. We could have invested elsewhere, but we have posted all our resources here because we love our country. Through good times, we have brought even more money into the country and that we have invested right here in Manila on consequence.

It is our hope that our voice will be given its fair share of coverage in the Philippine media.

—EMILIO M. LOPEZ, Chair,
Fil-Am Philippine Holdings Corp.

Marine response network overdue

THIS IS IN REACTION TO "THE Inquirer article titled "Mariotti helps stranded marine mammals" (Inquirer, 5/14/08).

The concept of a national marine mammal stranding response network is the country is long overdue. Population of dolphins and whales are found through our waters and a national response network is necessary to rescue, treat and rehabilitate those injured.

Ideally, any stranded animal must be treated by marine mammal experts. Those that receive for point should be entrusted immediately while those that can be returned on site should be treated and released immediately. Those with minor injuries must be brought to facilities for treatment and rehabilitation. The size of all rescue and rehabilitation centers is the eventual release of animals back to the wild. Animals that have sustained major injuries, such that they cannot be released, must be cared for and maintained in the facility until the end of their natural life.

Unfortunately for Tita and Sam, two dolphins at Ocean adventure, "rescue" comes at a terrible price—performing. For Ambon (stranded in 2002), three of its five fellow whales have died. All the animals which died were juvenile. We commend the UP College of Law Marine and Rehabilitation of Marine Mammals (URGAMM-MMRS) in its effort to raise funds to support the rescue and rehabilitation of marine mammals in the Philippines. However, we hope that they are aware that the Subic Bay Marine Exploration (SBME), operators of the Ocean Adventure Park, is facing a criminal complaint at the Court of Appeals for the violation of the Animal Welfare Act (RA 8485).

—FREDI LINGERCION,
regional director,
Earth Island Institute (EII);
ANNA REBECCA CABRERA,
director, Philippine Animal
Welfare Society (PAWS)

Limay, Bataan civil servants hailed

I AM A SENIOR CITIZEN RESIDing in Tabiran City, Leyte. I would like to commend the civil registrars and staff of Limay town in Bataan for their prompt action on my application for the issuance of my birth certificate despite the fact that I made my request through mail and phone calls only. In less than a month I got my birth certificate.

This is an example of good government service which should be commended and emulated. May there be more government servants like them.

—RAMON A. ROJAS,
San Jose, Tacloban City

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INQUIRER

SOURCE: Synovate Nationwide Urban Media Atlas Survey, January to December 2007

Across the NATION

Probe of shabu smuggling expands

Subic drug haul opens old wounds for councilor

By Robert Gonzaga
Inquirer Northern Luzon

OLONGAPO CITY—THE surprise last week of more than 700 kilograms of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) inside the Subic Bay Freeport opened old wounds for Councilor Aries de los Reyes, whose 14-year-old sister was murdered by a drug addict here 20 years ago.

On Monday, De los Reyes, who belongs to the Gordon political clan and a member of the political party Ang Kapatiran, assailed officials of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, saying it was their responsibility to prevent drug smuggling inside the freeport.

"Judging from the quantity and the manner in which these contraband were smuggled, these smugglers are well connected," said De los Reyes.

"As a councilor of SBMA, I feel very sad as a victim of a crime because my 20-year-old sister who was murdered by a man under the influence of illegal drugs, I demand accountability and prosecution of all those involved. Heads must roll for this issue," he said.

Murder

De los Reyes' sister, Maricris, was murdered inside the bedroom of their grandmother, former Mayor Amelia Gordon, on April 29, 1982, in the family's ancestral home in Barangay New Banicain.

It is the same village where drug lord Jaime Chiong-Pi Ignacio businessman said to be behind the illegal drugs shipment in the Freeport last week, lives.

"[Maricris] was murdered by our relatives' baby-sitter's brother, the killer is now very spontaneous. He went inside the room of my grandma where my sister and her playmates [supposed to be sleeping]. He raped the boys and killed her sister. Then, he turned on my sister who witnessed what he did," De los Reyes told the Inquirer.

"It is deplorable that these things happen with impunity," he said.

"For the sake of our children, to respect the memory of my sister, I told those like her who were victimized by drug addicts, that government should have no use compromising anti-illegal drugs agenda," he said.

De los Reyes said SBMA Administrator Armand Arreza must defend the honor of his office until the discovery of illegal drugs in the freeport.

"If he can't, then chairperson Interim Jocelly on his case," said Irene Reyes.

Arreza, in an earlier interview, said he was concerned that international drug syndicates have started using the Subic freeport as a "consolidation point" for shabu.

He, however, said he did not believe the entire shipment was meant for the Philippine consumption and transshipment.

Isolated case

"Some, if not most of the shipment, we suspect, will be taken out of the country. [The shipment] would have been immediately taken out of the freeport customs if the smuggler did not intend to bring it somewhere else," Arreza said.

[Who indeed if Ang was a friend]

in prison in the freeport, Arreza said: "I don't know. I don't have him. I have news and him."

Arreza, in a statement, said the seizure was an "isolated case."

VOLLEYBALL BELLES
Micro-women students of a Montessori school play volleyball using a brute at Barangay Ugalingan in Carmona town, Metro Cavalcade.

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer General Luzon

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—THE CHIEF OF the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group has asked the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority to identify all associates of a businessman behind the smuggling of more than 700 kilograms of shabu at the Subic Bay Freeport.

The illegal drugs seized in the freeport last week, officially weighing 714.66 kg, were said to be the biggest haul of highgrade, shabu-like methamphetamine hydrochloride) in the country. The PNRG initially reported that the haul weighed about 779 kg.

PNRG chief Antonio Villar Jr. gave the order ahead of the signing of a memorandum of agreement for the partnership of PAGC, PDEA and SBMA on stopping the entry of illegal drugs through the freeport, a former United States naval base in Zambales.

Villar said the illegal drugs seized on Tuesday and Wednesday last week included in the "Taiwanese" of the suspect, Andrew Ang, to carry out his illicit trade.

Ang associates

"We will have to identify, if possible, question, the associates of Ang in business or in politics so that we can determine his connections or clarify the involvement of people reportedly linked to him," Villar said in a telephone interview on Monday.

Citing ongoing operations, Villar declined to give the names of people associated with Ang.

The case he illegal drug trading filed at the Olongapo City prosecutor's office on Friday showed at least 15 incorporators of Ang's company, the Sun Long International Inc., which is based at the freeport.

Aside from Ang, the complaint-affidavit filed during the preliminary investigation listed as respondents Estrella Ang, Henry Ho, Robert Lee, Ruth Chan, Gli Chang Cheng, Go Tek-ong, Jun Jose Reng, Eang Yew Eng, Jun Jet Wael, Wu Jia Bao, Ho Li Lin and Li Jia Zhao.

Sun Long is registered in the SBMA as an importer of cigarettes and liquor from China, forwarding them to other Asian countries, importers records showed. It has been doing the business at the freeport in the last two years.

Ang, together with his family, has left their house in West Bajac Bajac in Olongapo City last week.

His neighbors, however, were surprised when they learned that Ang was behind the illegal drugs shipment.

"We were shocked when we heard the news about the drug seizure. We could not believe that Mr. Ang could been involved. He seemed like a really nice man. He's kind and law abiding," said Elsa Tenorio, barangay secretary of West Bajac Bajac.

Tenorio said Ang, whose family has lived in the village for more than 10 years, always helped out in their activities.

No bad record

"He was very active in the community. On Tuesday, when the news broke, they (Ang and his family) all disappeared. They left the community completely. They were involved in," she said.

Ang, according to Tenorio, lived in "skyscraper mansion" in their village.

Laboratory tests conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation showed the recovered shabu were "98 percent high grade."

Asked if Fidel Valdez, its chief, would resign if the substances qualified the comparison of the substances, Villar said.

Chief Supt. Ernesto Pascua, General Luzon police director, said the contraband was possibly transshipped overseas.

With reports from Robert Gonzaga, Inquirer Central Luzon

CHR probes case of NDF consultant

CAGAYAN CITY—THE COMMission on Human Rights (CHR) in Cagayan Valley is looking into the arrest and detention on immigration charges of a National Democratic Front (NDF) peace consultant, who was allegedly tortured while under military and police custody.

CHR Chair Leila de Lima has given instructions to look into the case of Randy Felix Malayao, 28, spokesperson of the NDF Northern Luzon, and see if his rights were violated, Jimmy Rodigo, CHR regional director said.

Police and military officials earlier denied reports by human rights groups that he was tortured or maltreated while under their custody.

Maj. Gen. Melchor Diloldo, commander of the army's 5th Infantry Division, said Malayao was not involved based on warrants for two murder cases and other related murder case in Tuguegarao City, in connection with the killing of former Cagayan Rep. Rodolfo Aguinaldo on June 12, 2003.

Aguinaldo was a former colonel believed to be responsible for numerous torture cases during the Marcos dictatorship in the 1970s.

Malayao's rights were never violated when he was arrested by members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the Army's 502nd Infantry Brigade intelligence unit inside a bus in Gattaran, Read on May 15, Diloldo said.

Malayao is now under "light security" with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Tuguegarao, Senior Supt. Marcial Pilares, CIDG regional director, said.

Yillamor Hanjet Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

Fish load at GenSan port drops

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—THE TOLUME OF FISH BEing unloaded at the General Santos City Fish Port have has declined by more than a quarter during the first months of the year.

Mike Lamberte, port manager, said from January to April, the volume of fish unloaded here was only 180 metric tons compared to 250 metric tons for the same period last year.

He said it translated to a 28-percent drop.

Lamberte said the drastic change in weather patterns and conditions, the area covered by the fisheries agreement of the bilateral fishing agreement with the Philippines and the skyrocketing fuel prices were among the factors cited for the decline in the volume of fish landing here.

Marilu Tan, president of the Southeastern Federation of Fishing and Allied Industries (SFFAI), had also cited the same reasons for the declining catch among fishermen here.

"These are the factors which we think have greatly affected the volume of fish production here. The high cost of fuel takes a heavy toll on fishing operations especially that they are now considering fishing operations in the Pacific," Lamberte said.

Lamberte said what worried him was that if the situation continued, it would certainly affect the operations of the fish port.

The fish port's operations, he said, is not dependent on any subsidy or budget from the national government.

He said the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority was in the final stage of negotiations with agents of foreign fishing fleets for an agreement.

(grabbed E. Zarate, Inquirer Mindanao)

Puerto cop chief sacked

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—THE PHILIPPINE NATIONal Police Mimaropa Regional Office Monday ordered the relief of the controversial police chief of Puerto Princesa City after has been facing several complaints of abuse of authority filed by local citizens.

PNP Mimaropa Regional Director Lumiro Pabayo ordered his relief on Saturday carrying the relief order of Supt. Enrique Ancheta, according to Sr. Supt. Dennis Siervo, Palawan provincial police director.

Ancheta, who took a leave of absence, was in Manila and was not available for comment.

City officials, on the other hand, were mum about Ancheta's relief order and his replacement by an officer in charge, Supt. Rona Erwyn Rodriguez Jr. Ayala, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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15 Maritime employees nabbed for extortion

ZAMBOANGA CITY—FIFTEEN personnel of the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) were arrested for alleged extortion and illegal possession of firearms on Subasi Island in Isabela on Friday afternoon.

Rear Adm. Emilio Marayag Jr., Naval Forces Western Mindanao commander, said the arrest was made after receiving reports that heavily armed men boarded a fishing boat and reportedly demanded some cash from the operator.

"We believe this group is one of the syndicates operating in the area," Marayag said.

Recovered from the suspects were 10 high-powered firearms, ammunition, and a pair of binoculars.

"They (suspects) are considered terrorists in some way," Marayag said.

He identified the leader of the suspects as Omar Sulapeid, Jr., who is also deputized by the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group (PASG) in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Dewey Wilbe Marina administrator in the ARMM, denied the allegations against his men.

"Our personnel were conducting a legit buy-bust operation, and all their operational gears are covered with documents and permits, including their seized firearms," Wilbe said.

Wilbe said Sulapeid's and 14 other Marina personnel apprehended fishing boat Universal Shipping for allegedly operating in Subi and Tawi-Tawi waters without approval.

"We didn't violate any law here. It's the Universal Shipping that violated the law and now our people were arrested for it—even that news really happened," Wilbe added. Nelbe B. Bilasano, Inquirer Mindanao

Bus plows into store; 19 injured

By Jhonnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—SEVENTEEN PERsons were injured when a Ceres Bus plowed into a sari-sari store in Barangay Tisaan, Naga City some 22 kilometers south of Cebu City.

PO1 Ian Cabreza of the Naga City police station said the bus, driven by 37-year-old Rodolfo Garcesing, a resident of Samsonville, Cebu, was heading for Cebu City when the accident occurred at around 5 a.m. on Sunday.

Cabreza said Garcesing claimed that he was trying to veer away from people who were pushing a small vehicle when the bus slipped, before it crashed into the store owned by Evangeline Alcalde.

The impact destroyed the wall of the store that was then empty.

However, 17 persons inside the bus suffered minor injuries. Four of them, who complained of headaches, were admitted to the South General Hospital in Naga City. One of these was later transferred to Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu City.

Rosario Shit, staff member of the Cebu Bus Co. based in Mandaue City, said the company would shoulder the hospital expenses of the patients and pay for the damages to the store.

Shit also explained that Garcesing failed to see the road's end since the bus was negotiating a blind curve.

Shit also said the heavy downpour on Saturday night made the road very slippery and caused the accident.

Cabreza said none of the station were in the police station to file a complaint.

He said the police would release Garcesing, who could be charged with reckless imprudence, resulting in multiple physical injuries, if nobody would file a complaint by 3 p.m. Monday.

SCHOOL CLEANUP
Parents from Mandurriao Elementary School in Iloilo City start cleaning their children's classrooms in preparation for the opening of classes next week. —ARNEL HALAGUEÑA BORJA/CONTRIBUTOR

Damaged bridge in Quezon town closed to heavy vehicles

LUCENA CITY—HEAVY VEHicles from Bicol and Metro Manila passing along the Maharlika Highway have been advised by the Department of Public Works and Highways to make a detour in Lagnas, Atimonan due to the ongoing repair of the Antang bridge in Sariaya, Quezon.

Colonito Flaviola, chief of DPWH-Quezon 2nd engineering district, said the bridge had a crack in the middle section after a big rock pound early dawn Friday.

"We're conducting a 24-hour repair. Maybe until Tuesday we can make the bridge passable at least for light vehicles," Flaviola told over the phone Sunday.

She advised drivers of heavy vehicles and passenger buses from Bicol and Metro Manila to temporarily take the Lucban, Quezon-Pagbilao, Laguna road to avoid unnecessary delay in their travel.

She said Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. had ordered local highways workers to use all government resources to make the damaged bridge passable to all kinds of vehicle as soon as possible.

Flaviola estimated the completion of the bridge repair in 18 to 20 days.

Motorists from Metro Manila who were not aware of the damaged bridge were advised to take the private road inside the Pres Bridge quarry plant in Barangay Sampaloc II along the Maharlika Highway and exit at the village of Tumbaga-Tres in the southern part of Sariaya.

Lucena City police personnel manning checkpoints along the Maharlika Highway have been advising drivers of heavy vehicles from Bicol to make a detour towards Lucban town.

The heavy volume of vehicles passing Sariaya has caused a kilometer-long traffic jam and several hours of delay due to its narrow roadside.

New bypass road

On May 28, the DPWH unveiled an unfinished bypass road project in Candelaria town that was supposed to ease the flow of traffic along the Pan-Philippine Highway (PHP) also known as the Maharlika Highway.

Bonifacio Segsit, regional director of DPWH-Calabarzon (Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon), briefed President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo during her visit here on the proposed P622-million Candelaria-town bypass road project.

The proposed 7.1-kilometer two-lane concrete road has five connecting bridges and will be patterned after the PHP.

Segsit said that once completed, the new road would decongest traffic along the Maharlika Highway by reducing the volume of passing vehicles, which could enhance tourism and promote economic development in Quezon province.

"It will also provide a faster, safer and shorter travel time from Manila to Bicol region," said the DPWH official.

The planned new road will traverse agricultural lands and coconut plantations and will cross the Philippine National Railways track in the village of Mangilag Sur.

Segsit said the project had been allocated an initial fund of P100 million for the current year.

Segsit also briefed the President on the progress of the Quezon province's road project which is divided into three phases: the 7.44-km Guinyangan-Tulaan section with three concrete bridges costing P215 million; the 10.2-km Guinyangan-Hondian section (new bridges), P205 million; and the 11.43-km Tulaan-Lucena (Inverness road section, P240 million.

The 29.7-km road project starts from Barangay Hondian in Sariaya and will pass through several coastal villages and exit at the Lucena City diversion road going to Rizal region. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

5 Sipalay execs suspended for negligence

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE OFFICE OF THE Ombudsman has suspended five officers of Sipalay City for the purchase of overpriced medicines in 2002.

The five found liable for "negligence in the performance of official duties" were city revenue collection officer Evangeline Briones, city accountant Eva Subiaga, city budget officer Fernando Dalisay, city health officer Noel Villanueva and city treasurer Renato Murcilla.

The five were members of the committee that carried out the emergency purchase of medicines and medical supplies worth P700,000 intended for the city's air pollution victims that the Ombudsman said was overpriced by 100 to 600 percent.

The Ombudsman defined negligence as the failure to observe a provision of the (norm of) another person, such that that person suffers injury.

The Ombudsman, in its decision, noted that the medicine purchased by the respondents were overpriced when compared to the separate canvass made by the complainant and the Ombudsman of the present prices of said medicines.

"In the instant case, we have ascertained from our evaluation of the circumstances that the respondents were indeed remiss in exercising due diligence to purchase medicines at the most reasonable price that would be to the best advantage of the city," the Ombudsman noted.

The Ombudsman dismissed the charges against Oscar Montilla, who was mayor of Sipalay City when the charges were filed, by virtue of the Aguinaldo doctrine.

Montilla won his third term as mayor of Sipalay in 2004, so his administrative liability was deemed condoned by virtue of his new mandate as granted under the Aguinaldo doctrine, the decision said.

Montilla is now the vice mayor of Sipalay City, having won the vice mayoral race in 2007.

The suspension order was approved by Acting Ombudsman Orlando Casimiro on March 6, and received by the Negros Occidental provincial government only on May 26.

The complaint for alleged violation of the Anti-Graft Law was filed against the respondents on July 1, 2002 by the People's Confluence of Negros Occidental and signed by the late Dr. Herminio Tan.

Ten-fold their purchase of what he called overpriced medicines and supplies for residents of the city's Barangay San Jose who developed respiratory illnesses caused by air pollution coming from the nearby abandoned site of Marcventure Mines, Tan had said.

Tan then claimed that the basis for the emergency purchase was false since the then pollution did not happen until January or February 2002.

The Ombudsman later found the medicines and medical supplies to be overpriced, noting among others that the hospital witness that the city purchased were 600 percent more than the prices of other suppliers, while the disposable syringes cost 200 percent more.

"The nature of an emergency purchase should not be abused and this is the message we are sending here," the Ombudsman said.

Dureza urges gov't peace execs to work with MILF on blast probe

COTABATO CITY—FORMER presidential adviser on the peace process Jesus Dureza on Sunday ordered the government's coordinating committee on counter-of hostilities chief to work closely with his counterpart in the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to the probe for the recent explosion in Zamboanga City that killed two people and wounded more than 20 others.

Dureza, now presidential secretary and due to initial disturbing reports about the alleged involvement of some MILF commanders, government's chief for coordinating committee on cessation of hostilities Brig. Gen. Rey Tadiana was drawn, al to engage his counterparts in the MILF and Ariel Angly into the blast.

But Gen. Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal, police chief for Western Mindanao, blamed the May 29 attack on the MILF Special Operations Group which merged with the Abu Sayyaf Group in Basilan.

The blast occurred along Sta. Maria village, particularly at the Air Manotol Wing Savings and Loan Association building, which is across the Edwin Andrews Air Base and which houses the offices of the US-funded Alliance for Mindanao Off-Grid Renewable Energy (Amore) and of Zamboanga Rep. Ma. Isabel Climaco.

"Whatever the results are, the ceasefire mechanism is adequate and is under control to address these concerns. In the event

"We have to get those responsible for these barbaric acts'

case, let's all wait for the results. We have to get those responsible for these barbaric acts. Otherwise, innocent men, women and children will continue to become our peace loving citizens," Dureza said in a statement.

Abdilli Mohammad Mansoury, head of the Jolo, Jolo Islands, Sulu's department of the MILF, condemned the incident, describing the attack as the handiwork of "agents of darkness."

"Whoever did this evil act deserves the collective condemnation of everybody. There is no room for people like them in a civilized society," he said.

Khaled Musa, deputy chair of the MILF committee on information, said the MILF and AFP have been working together in pursuing their objectives.

He said the MILF is a legitimate Islamic revolutionary organization with a clear political agenda, which is to set an example to the Bangsamoro people's just struggle for freedom and right to self-determination.

He also said the MILF follows the rules of engagement to Islam and observes the various Geneva Conventions.

"Most of those so-called ASG in Basilan and Sulu fighting the military are plain armed civilians who used to seek revenge against the military for the various killings, summary executions committed against them," he said. Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao

NEWS

Miriam warns against rushing baselines bill

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By Cynthia D. Balana

SANTIAGO

SEN. MIRIAM Defensor Santiago yesterday swallowed "literature" in Congress" against pushing for a new baselines bill without getting expert advice as this could result in the Philippines losing its sovereignty over its internal waters.

Santiago, chair of the Senate foreign relations committee, was reacting to reports some countries treated by a new baselines bill passed quickly without consulting international law experts.

"Those elements will unwittingly turn our internal waters to foreigners," she said.

Article 1 of the Constitution describes the country's internal waters as "the waters around, between and connecting the islands of the archipelago."

Santiago said the move to push the baselines bill was a "case of the blind leading the blind because the country's internal waters would be transformed into 'archipelagic waters' under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos)."

The senator, an expert on constitutional and international law, said the "archipelagic waters" concept would allow foreigners to enjoy many rights inside Philippine territory such as the right of archipelagic sea lanes passage, right of innocent passage, traditional fishing rights by neighboring states, and right to repair or replace existing submarine cables laid by foreign states.

"Marawis should understand the right of innocent passage given to foreign vessels includes the right of navigation and overflight, not only for foreign commercial vessels, but also for foreign military vessels and aircraft. Can we handle that?" Santiago said.

Archipelagic waters concept

She said Unclos combined with the Philippine Constitution, not only because of the archipelagic waters concept, but because Unclos would severely limit Philippine sovereignty over its 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

She said the Constitution provides that: "The state shall protect the nation's marine wealth in its archipelagic waters, territorial sea and exclusive economic zone, and reserve its use and enjoyment exclusively to Filipino citizens."

Under Unclos, this constitutional provision will become invalid because Unclos provides that if the Philippines does not have the capacity to harvest the entire allowable catch, it should "give other states access to the surplus," Santiago said.

"In other words, instead of reserving the EEZ exclusively for Filipinos, the Philippines has to allow foreigners to fish in the EEZ. Thus, the Supreme Court will certainly declare Unclos unconstitutional. And then the foreign ones can sue RP for violation of Unclos before a foreign tribunal," Santiago said.

Lines connecting outermost islands

She defined baselines as the straight lines connecting the outermost points of the outermost islands of the Philippine archipelago.

A baseline is the starting point for computing the area of the 12-mile territorial sea limit, 24-mile contiguous zone, 200-mile exclusive economic zone and 200-mile continental shelf of a country.

The Philippines needs a new baselines bill in order to be able to compute the area of the extended continental shelf (ECS), which could reach up to 350 miles. The deadline for filing a claim for ECS with the United Nations is May 13, 2009.

"Since we have one year to meet the deadline, why do we need to rush the baselines bill? First we should create a congressional commission on national territory so that we could use the expert and recommendations of international law experts as background material," Santiago said.

Aplus METRO
Editor Boner G. Dipasupil

No land available for new schools in Quezon City, says mayor

By Marlon Ramos

THE LACK OF AVAILABLE LAND for additional school buildings has hampered the Quezon City government's efforts to solve the shortage of classrooms in public schools, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte said yesterday.

Belmonte said the city's 142 high schools and 97 elementary schools could barely accommodate the more than 418,000 students expected this school year.

"Being the biggest city in Metro Manila, one would think that it's easy to build schools in Quezon City but the truth is we're running out of free spaces for new schools," the mayor told the Inquirer.

He said this was the main reason why he ordered the demolition of illegal structures in government-owned lots, especially those beside schools, to make way for the construction of additional classrooms.

Prices of property have gone up in the city, making it hard for the city government to acquire privately-owned land for schools.

With the city's student population growing by nearly three percent annually, there is really a need for more classrooms, Belmonte said.

There are at least six public high school with need additional classrooms to accommodate their students for this school year, he added.

According to the mayor, he has instructed the City Engineering Office to loosen the construction of 10 new school buildings for eight primary schools and five secondary schools.

"Once completed, that would translate to another 215 new classrooms for our students," Belmonte said.

In 2007, the city government had spent P2.6 billion for 1,200 classrooms and 87 school buildings.

The mayor said they have also finished repairing several buildings damaged by typhoons and other calamities.

The Quezon City government, Quezon City division schools superintendent, said the city needs at least 381 new classrooms to meet the ideal ratio of 46 students per classroom.

ARMY soldiers take a break from their duties to help clean up the Mariakan Elementary School in Pasay City while teachers at the Dr. Cayetano Salcedo Elementary School in Pasig, Manila, fight photo ops their on classrooms. Classes in public schools will open on June 16. EPA/JOY

Models fined for working sans permits

Foreign entertainers eyeing gigs here also warned by immigration bureau

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THREE FOREIGN MALE MODELS WERE FINED by the Bureau of Immigration for working in the country without the necessary permits.

IM Commissioner Marcelino Libanan ordered the three to pay P10,000 each after they were warned by agents of the bureau on Friday during a facility inspection in Pasay City.

The models were identified as Emanuel Jesus Anderson, 26, from the United States; Claudio Andrei Ana Esquivel, 23, from Argentina and Bernardo Estevan Arriagada Beltran, 22, from Chile.

Libanan warned the three—who were here on relaxed—that working on the country once more without a permit would merit more severe penalties like summary deportation and the inclusion of their names on the ID blacklist.

"We are also warning other foreign entertainers engaged or are about to engage in gainful activity in the Philippines to secure the required work permits and visas, lest they, too, be fined for violating the country's immigration laws," Libanan said in a statement.

Based on IB records, the three models were fined for violating the conditions of their stay or months in the country.

Behind the Integrated System Information Software, a staff has been created to coordinate and the city government for faster transactions in property, investment and taxation, land use zoning and planning, and business permit and license issuance.

"I believe making government services available online will not only help cut red tape in the bureaucracy but will also reduce corruption," Tiaga said.

World Bank country director Brad Mc Donald said his statement that the report provides important insights to guide reform-minded local government units (LGUs).

"Cities that do well in creating a good business climate are also likely to do well in poverty alleviation," he added. "The World Bank and IFC are keen on supporting LGUS open to reforms."

'Mandaluyong, Taguig business-friendly cities'

By Beverly T. Mendoza and Jodie M. Aurelio

THE WORLD BANK HAS CITED the cities of Taguig and Mandaluyong as among the country's most business-friendly cities, hailing them for their speedy processing of business transactions.

The World Bank Group report titled "Doing Business in the Philippines 2008" was released through its private sector arm, the International Finance Corp. It was published in cooperation with the Asian Institute of Management and the National Competitive Council.

The report, which covered 21 Philippine cities and 178 countries, was aimed at showing cities how to identify opportunities toward faster progress and development.

It covered three areas of regulation: starting a business, licensing and property registration.

Mandaluyong was cited for making it easier for businessmen to transfer ownership of property and for processing business transactions in only 21 days, compared to an average of six weeks in other cities nationwide.

The city was ranked 20th in the agency's ranking of 178 local governments for having simplified procedures in business.

On the other hand, Taguig was cited for its simplified government procedures in starting up a business, such processing taking only 27 days.

The World Bank also cited the city for having the minimum number of procedures in applying for a business permit and the lowest number of licensed procedures.

Taguig City ranked first among cities with the easiest business startup, followed by Mandaluyong City, the cities of Cebu and Muntinlupa tied for third place.

"We are thankful to the International Finance Corporation and the World Bank for the citation. Nonetheless, there is still a lot to be done, and this award will give us the impetus we need in improving service efficiency," said Mayor Freddie Tiaga.

Tiaga was also recognized for its Customer Service Office which reduced the number of requirements in obtaining business permits and the number of days in processing of applications for permits upon submission of the documents.

One of the city's upcoming projects is an online system for easier property assessment and taxation for business owners.

Behind the Integrated System Information Software, a staff has been created to coordinate and the city government for faster transactions in property, investment and taxation, land use zoning and planning, and business permit and license issuance.

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Lozada hits MMDA proposal on La Salle traffic

By Margaux C. Ortiz

RODOLFO NOEL "ROY" Lozada Jr., the star witness in the investigation into the controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) project, yesterday called the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's proposal to limit the number of students at La Salle Green Hills "another form of harassment" against him.

Traffic jams

"Even since I could remember, the area has always been plagued with traffic jams," Lozada told reporters after a hearing on the petition for a writ of amparo he filed in the Court of Appeals.

"This is the only time the school has been threatened with sanctions," he said.

The whistle-blower was reacting to a newspaper report that, in the statement which quoted MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando as saying that he had asked Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos to order La Salle officials to limit the number of their students in order to reduce traffic in the area on school days.

The report was presented during the hearing as evidence of the continuing harassment against Lozada who earlier testified before the Senate on the $329-million NBN deal with China's ZTE Corp.

Custody

Lozada had his family as in the case of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines and are sheltered at the La Salle Green Hills Brothers' house.

"This is just another form of harassment against the La Salle brothers by keeping me there," Lozada said.

Order

According to the news report, Fernando had met with Abalos and urged him to order La Salle's management to limit the number of its students to ease the traffic on Ortigas Avenue.

The lawsuit, reportedly commissioned Fernando to get his side but calls made to his cell phones were answered by a studio who said that he was attending a meeting.

No more sad songs for lucky 2-year-old

By Jeannette I. Andrade

AFTER JENNELYN GUAMING, A 31-year-old housewife, gave birth to Sam, her youngest son, she and her friends attributed his condition to her susceptible proneness for cardiac during her pregnancy.

Sam was born on Jan. 26, 2006, with an imperforate anus, a condition that affects only one in every 5,000 children. Without an anus, the baby was unable to get rid of the waste in his body the normal way.

"We found out about his condition two days after I gave birth to him with the help of a midwife in our home. I was cleaning him up with a cotton ball soaked in baby oil when I noticed he had no anus," Jennelyn told the Inquirer.

Jennelyn is married to Mounir, 43, a seaman in San Dionisio, Parañaque. The couple said their conception live in a nipa hut which belongs to the owner of the land Mounir is tilling.

Despite their poverty, Jennelyn said she was determined to let Sam live a normal life, even if it means working long hours selection and transport in faraway places, including Libya in Manila.

She turned to her aunt, Angelita Gumaling, and her cousin, Jessie Magbanua, for help. The two women, residents of Barangay Culo, Bacoor, Cavite, are both midwives.

CLEARING OUR Sam

With the money they borrowed, Sam immediately underwent a colostomy.

The boy, however, needed to undergo another procedure, an abdominal perineal pull-through operation to remove the rectum ("pullthrough") and sew into a newly-made anal opening in the perineum. The operation costs at least P100,000.

With the help of Senate President Manuel Villar who agreed to finance the operation, Sam was operated on at the Philippine General Hospital.

Dr. Esther Sugui, the PGH pediatric surgeon who led the surgery team of four doctors, told the Inquirer that the procedure took three to six hours but remarked that it was good that the operation was done while Sam is still young.

"Children should be given a chance to live normal lives. It was good that the procedure was done in early so possible to allow the child to develop normally," she said.

Sam is expected to go through one last operation—the closure of the stoma or his abdomen—a source of relief for his mother.

"I am sure now that he will live and grow up normally like other children," she said.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT
Skateboarders go for air on their jumping ride at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City

Men in cops' duds rob Antipolo City grocery

By Beverly T. Hamsiraat

TEN ARMED MEN, posing as policemen, forcibly entered a grocery store in Antipolo City early morning yesterday in an attempt to rob the place.

Witnesses said the men tried to rob the Chevy Foodmaxx branch at 2:30 a.m. yesterday.

Policemen dispersed of the grocery told investigators that the group had identified themselves as members of the Philippine National Police Security Agency and Guard Supervision Division (PNP-SAGSD), who were responding to calls of a disturbance being in the area.

The armed men then disarmed the guards and took them to a nearby garbage disposal area, where they were hogtied.

Using the employees' exit at the basement, the group proceeded to the accounting department of the grocery located at the second floor.

Sledge hammer

The armed men then attempted to break through the concrete wall enclosing the vault using a sledge hammer and tried to force open a steel vault.

The vault, however, was empty, police said.

The assailants were able to bring with them two shotguns and one .38 caliber gun from the guards they had disarmed.

The robbery suspects spoke in a Bisaya accent, according to the guards.

Similar case

Investigators said the incident was similar to a case last October in Valenzuela City.

In that incident, 11 Armed Forced duffel-bag wearing men robbed by men who also identified themselves as PNP-SAGSD contingents raiding the compound ostensibly to check on the work of the guards detailed at the area.

The Antipolo police said they were engaged in follow-up operations to identify and apprehend the suspects.

13 Ateneo graduates set to do volunteer work

By Marian Ramos

WITH LOST GREEN, AP glasses and passes from their family and friends to look them up, 13 young men and women the other day took up the challenge of being among the newest batch of Jesuit volunteers who would be deployed to far-flung communities nationwide to spread the message of hope.

In a ceremony held at the Church of the Gesu on the Ateneo de Manila University campus in Quezon City, Fr. William Stanfield extended the volunteers, of which four are program aims to impact in their host communities.

"Spread the good news of the Lord. Show the people that God loves all of us. Share the hope with the communities," said Stanfield who founded the program in 1979.

Edlyn Ribanes, executive director of Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation Inc. (JVPFI), said the volunteers were selected from among 30 hopefuls who applied for admission into the program. He added that the volunteers would be sent to schools, local government units and non-governmental organizations.

"Together, these volunteers value and live out our core values of social justice, spirituality, service, solidarity and simplicity," he said.

For 10 months, three of the volunteers will work in public schools in Davao, Batanes and Siargao Islands provinces. The rest will work in youth and community organizations in the provinces of Palawan, Oriental Mindoro and Zambales.

Charmae Luzog, a recent AIMS management economics graduate, said she is both anxious and excited to embark on her new role as youth and education program coordinator in Siargao province.

"There will be a drastic change in my lifestyle but I'm excited because this is a chance of a lifetime for me," she said.

Detention of Adonis not good for Nograles

ON TARGET
Xianne Arcilla

SPEAKER PROSPERO "BOY" Nograles is in the limelight again for the continued detention of Iranian aid to commercial sex diva Adonis.

Adonis, nursing fans for "slandering" Nograles, was supposed to have been out free on parole.

But Deputies' alleged persistence has filed a criminal case against Adonis, prompting the Department of Justice to withhold his release.

Boy Deputies' indecisiveness, here's unsolicited advice from your resident ivy adviser: they is married to my second cousin, Edlyn. No matter what you say, that still have nothing to do with Adonis' continued detention, people would believe you.

Darren Cruz, which was reportedly in Congress, is abuzz with rumors that you and the actress really had a relationship.

Here, as to whether you can indeed be withheld based after allegedly being caught by the actress's husband in bed with her—that's something else.

Be your own admission, Adonis just picked up the money from a Manila tabloid and made a commentary on it.

Even if he was the actress's lover case against Adonis that is keeping him in jail after posting bail, people will think you are responsible for his continued detention.

If I were you, I would persuade the woman to drop the libel case.

Both of you and the woman have already proved your point since Adonis is in jail.

Just say will to Justice Vicente Gadiel: Merap, either na ang pagdating dang sana inaasa kan Adonis (If would appear you're oppressing Adonis na rimdi).

• • •

Last Saturday, I said that Japanese businessman Isao Tomita was released Friday from the Bureau of Immigration jail after "knocking on Kay Tuño" made representations with immigration officials.

I was able to convince Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan that Tomita's continued detention would not be good for the country's image abroad.

Libanan then allowed Tomita to allow the Japanese tourist to post bail and he approved.

But I spoke too soon about his release.

He was released only yesterday because of bureaucratic red tape.

Tomita was arrested and jailed for allegedly hitting a fellow woman passenger at the cargo carousel of the Manila Domestic Airport.

The Japanese tumbled added to his blessed on bail, but immigration authorities would not allow that since they were afraid of the woman.

The complainant is a young lawyer who happens to be the daughter of Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia and owner of Princess Garcia, president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System, has powerful figures in the upper administration.

You know why Tomita had to spend two more days at the immigration jail in Bicutan even after his release papers were already signed by Libanan Friday?

The soldier would not accept the bail bond payment of 4 p.m., which was still within office hours.

Tomita's release order was signed by Libanan Friday morning.

Somehow, the papers moved at a snail's pace, in the immigration offices where the order passed.

Nonsy, perhaps you don't know this, but some of your people were allegedly asking Tomita for P2 million for his release.

Another story making the rounds is that whenever Tomita was escorted to the prosecutor's office, immigration guards allegedly demanded P1,000 for each of them from the detainee.

That's why he is telling you this, Nonsy, since you were kind enough to consult Tomita his temporary freedom, but I thought you should check if these stories about your subordinates are accurate.

Pneumococcal Disease

Seniors Beware, Be Aware

As we age, the risk of acquiring certain diseases increases which can be attributed to certain factors such as decrease physical activity, poor nutrition and age- related impairment of the immune system, as stated by Dr. Shelley de la Vega past President of the Philippine Society for Geriatric Medicine. One disease that is a threat to the elderly population is Pneumococcal disease.

Killer Profile

The cottage of illness caused by a common bacterium, Streptococcus pneumoniae, is termed as Pneumococcal disease. This disease has been recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a leading cause of serious illness and death worldwide. Pneumococcal disease includes infections that are invasive like meningitis and bacteremia and the more common non-invasive infections such as otitis media, sinusitis and bronchitis. Pneumococcal disease is the most common infection that affects adults. In fact even a highly industrialized country like the United States, has an alarming 40,000 deaths annually due to pneumococcal disease, accounting for more deaths than any vaccine preventable diseases.

The bacteria are easily transmitted by saliva droplets from patients and carriers. Illness are the individuals who harbor the bacteria in their nose and throat. The transmission can be done through coughing, sneezing, talking and even kissing. There is a higher probability that the bacteria is passed on in certain environments where there is contact and crowding like hospitals, day care centers and army barracks.

Invasive pneumococcal disease

Pneumococcal pneumonia although not considered as invasive is the most common form of pneumococcal disease, and death due to pneumonia is higher in the elderly population especially those > 65 years old. Death is usually due to acute respiratory failure when the patient is non responsive to treatment. Pneumococcal pneumonia is treatable with penicillin and other antibiotics but recently the bacteria have grown resistant resulting to a more complex disease management. Dr. de la Vega added.

Bacteremia is the invasion of bacteria in the bloodstream, but when the organisms reaches different organs it is called septicemia. The mortality of pneumococcal bacteremia increases with age and those who contract it have serious long-term complications.

Prevention better than cure

Prevention is better than cure is an old cliche but with the increasing cost of medication and hospitalization, health care providers have gained towards preventive management. Vaccination has been recognized as the most effective strategy to prevent certain diseases, in fact it has eradicated smallpox from the face of the earth. There are certain groups that are targeted for pneumococcal vaccination- people > 65 years, young children; people with serious health problems such as those with heart, kidney and lung diseases; including those with diabetes; those with illnesses that reduce immunity to infections such as those with leukemia or HIV; people with damaged or no spleen. One type of pneumococcal vaccine available provides protection for as long as five years.

Dr. Dela Vega concluded that, health care goals for the elderly include extending lifespan and functionality and this can only be done when they are healthy. Disease prevention then is more important in the elderly and awareness helps towards understanding prevention.

With that, it is safe to say that it is better to be aware than be sorry.

GOODBYE TO SUMMER
Enjoying the last days of their summer break, these children pick guava from from a tree at the Ang UP Village in Quezon City

METROBRIEFS

Shabu chemicals seized

AUTHORITIES yesterday seized chemicals which could reportedly be used to make about P100 million worth of shabu in Malabon.

Ammonium hydrochloride drugs and one suspected laboratory in Barangay Hulong Duhat were found by police during a search warrant served by Malabon City Judge Jesus Mislang.

Police District Director Lt Leonel Nuel Nebrida and Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency agents found the shabu materials inside a unit of the Hulong Duhat Public Market, police said.

Police arrested Gemma Tan, an alleged chief caretaker who was tabbed to be entertained upon arrival on Friday. He is facing charges of illegal sale and possession of dangerous drugs. Tabbed with the chemicals could make 30 kilos of shabu worth P100 million, said Senior Supt. Benjamin Magalong, PDEA Metro Manila director, adding that police also found out the materials have yet to undergo laboratory tests.

Allison M. Lopez and Elizabeth Bolos

Fake jeans warehouse raided

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation has raided a rental PI. a million worth of fake jeans from a warehouse in Pandacan City. Agents of the Intellectual Property Rights Division, led by their chief, Ely Villanueva, raided the warehouse of Saksoft Systems and Allied Services Inc. in the wages San Martin de Porres on May 29. Nearly 1,000 pieces of fake Levi jeans were confiscated from the facility owned by brothers Jerry Chua and Jessie Ong who operate stalls in the Pandacan Shopping Mall and Parkal Bargain Center, both in Pasay City. Both will be charged with violation of the 1993 Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

Allison M. Lopez and Elizabeth Bolos

1 dead, 1 hurt in accident

A DEPARTMENT store employee was killed while his co-worker remains in critical condition when the motorcycle they were riding crashed at 1:30 a.m. yesterday into a concrete post of a flyover in Kamuning, Quezon City. Cristo Aquino, an employee of Shoemart Cubao, died instead of Reynaldo Santiago Nuno, 30, who was on the road of a crushed skull while Jeffrey Carpenter, 23, of Buena Road, Bambinos, Quezon City, a motorcycle mechanic for head injuries at the Care Avenue Medical Center. Aquino, who was driving, reportedly lost control of the vehicle and sideswiped inside the post.

Jeannette I. Andrade

DID YOU KNOW

THE FIRST church in Makati City was named in honor of the "Lady of Guadalupe" 1601, in response to a petition made by Spaniards and Mexicans there. The image of Guadalupe reportedly appeared in 1531 in Mexico when Aztec Indian named Juan Diego

Cyril L. Bonalaos, Inquirer Research

Australia ends combat operations in Iraq

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—Australia's defense ministry said Monday that pulling the country's combat troops out of Iraq was more than symbolic as the withdrawal there eases the 3,000 ID.And marines had overstretched Australia's military resources.

The defense department announcement Sunday is officially ended combat operations in Iraq and its 550 combat troops had begun returning home from their deployment in southern Iraq.

"It's that right time to bring our troops home," Defense Minister Joel Fitzgibbon said a news conference. "Indeed, the time to bring them home has passed."

He said Australia's military was overstretched with commitments in East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq.

"Roughly half of our infantry and specialist support have said to those deployments. That is an unsustainable position," he said.

The head of Australia's defense forces, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, said Iraqi had taken over security in the southern area where the marines were based and where they had been on standby for the past two years to offer backup to Iraqi forces.

"The operational over which marines is complete and the Iraqis are handling business in the province," Houston said.

Australia, a staunch U.S. ally, was one of the first countries to commit troops to the Iraq war five years ago.

On Sunday's, the soldiers' farewell the Australian flag that had flown over Camp Smityman in the southern Iraqi city of Tall, marching, to end to their service there. The combat troops were expected to return to Australia over the next few weeks, with the first of them arriving home Sunday afternoon.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said Monday the move fulfilled promises ahead of his November election to bring home the soldiers by the middle of 2008.

Rudd told Parliament that he remained committed to Australia's alliance with the United States although his government would keep its foreign policy independent of Washington's.

"The government does not believe that our alliance with the United States mandates automatic compliance with every element of the United States' foreign policy," Rudd told Parliament.

Rudd's predecessor, former Prime Minister John Howard, said he was "baffled" by the decision to withdraw the troops, saying in an interview published Monday in the Sydney Morning Herald that he would have shifted the troops into a training role in Iraq.

AP

CHILDREN play in a Baghdad park on June 1. Unicef has said that only 40 percent of children over Iraq have access to safe drinking water and only 50 percent of girls attend high school. Both numbers are alarmingly low.

US to Thailand: Military should not seize power

BANGKOK—U.S. DEFENSE SECRETARY Robert Gates delivered a clear message to Thai leaders on Sunday that Washington expected the military to respect its civilian masters and refrain from any attempt to seize power.

A week of anti-government protests in Bangkok have ignited fears that the military may stage another coup, two years after a similar street campaign against then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra led to his ouster in a bloodless putsch.

At a meeting in Bangkok with Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej, who is also the defense minister, and a dozen senior military officers, Gates said democracy was the foundation of America's relationship with the Thai military.

"It is one of the reasons why the overwhelming view in our country is that the military-to-military relationship is based upon shared values," said a senior US defense official, briefing reporters on the condition that he was not named.

"He's not threatening," the official said. "But the message was clear, and respectful."

Before leaving for Bangkok from Singapore, Gates held separate meetings "Our position is pretty consistent. We want to see democratically elected governments and we will respect that."

Gates' visit to Thailand was arranged as part of a broader Asia tour before the current protests against the pro-Thaksin government started to intensify last month.

Earlier, a former CIA director who took over at the Pentagon from Donald Rumsfeld in late 2006, praised Thailand as a economic partner.

"Thailand is an old ally of the United States," he said in Singapore, where he attended the annual Shangri-La dialogue of Asian defense and security officials.

The United States lifted restrictions on aid to Thailand in February after a new elected government took power.

Washington had suspended about $20 million in assistance to Thailand, including funds to support military education and counter-terrorism, after the bloodless 2006 coup.

Samak threatened on Saturday to use the police to break up a rally of 6,000 anti-government protesters. But police did not move against them after no apparent response by Samak, who accused the media of misreporting his remarks.

Samak is returning from a dumpling on the talk could add to concerns about the stability of Asia's second-largest economy, particularly after sudden border confrontations pitted Thailand's protesters at a rally last Sunday.

A Thai opposition group vowed to hold more street rallies.

"We will stay here until the government resigns," Somsak Kosaisuk, one of the People's Alliance for Democracy leaders, said.

Reuters

MILK RUN

A girl rides in a sped at talk on June 1 in Rajkamnoon. Clouds have filled a swimming pool with talk as a protest against the milk price. Several young kids took the chance to dive in the talk. ...

Iraq bits milestones on US troop deaths, oil

BAGHDAD—US TROOP DEATHS in Iraq fell to their lowest level last month since the 2003 invasion and officials said on Sunday improved security also helped the country boost oil production to May's previous high.

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Iraq's oil ministry credited better security for the two milestones, which illustrated a dramatic turnaround in the fortunes of a country on the brink of all-out sectarian civil war just 22 months ago.

"We've still got a distance to go but I think lower casualty rates are a reflection of some real progress," Gates told reporters on Singapore. "The key will be to continue to nurture the progress we have seen."

American generals have claimed that the security gains are both fragile and irreversible. That view shown to March, when an Iraqi government offensive against Shiite militias in southern Basra sparked a surge in violence in the capital and other cities, catching US and Iraqi officials off guard.

The US military said 19 soldiers died in May, the lowest monthly death toll in a five-year-old war that has so far claimed the lives of more than 4,000 American soldiers.

Oil Minister Hussein al-Shahristani said on his ministry's website the improved security had helped Iraq, which has the world's third-largest oil reserves, raise oil production to a post-war high of 2.5 million barrels per day in May.

Iraq's oil industry, hit by decades of sanctions, war and neglect, was a valuable target for saboteurs after the US invasion. Attacks on pipelines quickly destroyed any hopes of using Iraq's vast oil reserves to fund its reconstruction.

The military says violence in Iraq is now at a four-year low following crackdowns by US and Iraqi forces on Shiite militias in southern Basra and Baghdad's tid-rat al-Sadr district in the northern city of Mosul, its last major urban stronghold.

"In May we have succeeded for the first time to 2.2 million barrels per day export save. In production we have exceeded 2.5 million bpd," Shahristani said.

The number of Iraqi civilians killed in May also fell to 508, after reaching a seven-month high of 968 in April, figures compiled by the interior, defense and health ministries showed.

Oil officials credit the turnaround in security to President George W. Bush's decision to send 30,000 extra troops to Iraq, a rebellion by Sunni tribal leaders against al-Qaeda, and a ceasefire by anti-American Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

Reuters

Swiss voters reject plan on granting citizenship

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND—SWISS voters on Sunday defeated a measure that would have legitimized the practice of allowing secret votes by foreign people on granting citizenship to foreigners in their communities.

The vote was a blow to the powerful far-right Swiss People's Party known in SVP, which had initiated the measure. Overall, nearly 64 percent of voters cast "no" ballots, and the measure garnered a majority in only one of the country's 26 cantons.

The defeat means that the Swiss people "fully back our constitutional state," the Social Democratic Party, known as SP, said in a statement. Legal scholars said the measure would have violated the country's constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights, among other things, it would have denied applicants the appeals. Buoyed by the vote, the SP said it would soon introduce a initiative to automatically grant citizenship to third-generation foreigners.

The defeated measure would have overturned a Swiss Federal Court ruling in 2003 that found that secret citizenship votes by townspeople were unconstitutional. Despite that ruling, the practice had continued in some parts of the country.

The vote was seen as an important indicator of whether Switzerland, with a population of 7 million, was turning away from its more welcoming past as immigrants. Here the country almost 22 percent of Swiss residents are foreigners—the highest proportion in Europe except for Luxembourg and Liechtenstein.

The SVP has seen a rapid rise since the late 1990s. Asking for the will of the people in referendums is common in Switzerland's direct democracy and the SVP regularly spear-heads initiatives on questions over asylum and against entry to the European Union.

"The SVP has fashioned Switzerland's unusual political system of direct democracy to attract disgruntled voters to get their support, especially when it comes to topics regarding foreigners," said Oscar Mazzoleni, a political scientist and lecturer at the University of Lausanne. "The SVP wants to remain at the center of the political agenda, to keep its voters hear happy and possibly get new voters."

AFP

Taliban fighters find wide latitude inside Pakistan

By Jane Perlez

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN—AFTER HOSHE Ibrahim, the Pakistani Army first journalists on a supposed tour of the militant tribal areas in May to show how decisively it had destroyed the lair of the Taliban, including a school for suicide bombers, delighting each of the year.

Then, in the days before the usually exclusive leader of the Pakistani Taliban, Baitullah Mehsud, held a news conference of his own, in the same region, to show just who was in charge.

He rolled up in an expensive-looking Toyota pickup packed with heavily armed Taliban fighters, and announced he would press his fight against the US military across the border in Afghanistan.

"Islam does not recognize boundaries," he told the Japan media, according to quotes published in several Pakistani newspapers and reported by the BBC. "There can be no deal with the United States."

Mehsud's public appearance in his home base, South Waziristan, a tribal area in the rugged northwest of Pakistan, underscored the wide latitude Pakistan's government has granted the militants under a new series of peace deals, and its respect on the war in Afghanistan, where Bush and US military officials say sanctuaries in Pakistan have stoked since calls for direct peace deals began in March.

The impunity of Mehsud's bodyguards has reshaped the Bush administration's approach to the border region, which is pressing the Pakistani government to renew and expand its lists.

But the Pakistani government, which at times has considered Mehsud an ally and is now fearful of his power, appears reluctant to hunt him down. Days before his news conference, Pakistani forces pulled back from his strongholds in South Waziristan as part of the peace deals.

US and Pakistani officials accuse Mehsud of masterminding the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, a former prime minister, in December 2007 and sending suicide bombers both here and in Afghanistan, while forging a symbiotic relationship with al-Qaeda on Pakistan's border.

Mehsud and his main ally, Qari Hussain Mehsud, a 30-year-old militant who have described in a highly trained and particularly vicious militant, have methodically built up strongholds in North and South Waziristan—killing uncooperative tribal leaders, winning over some elected young tribesmen to their cause and filling the vacuum left by a lack of government services. Now they also have lieutenants and other assets the tribal region.

The Pakistani Taliban are spreading so fast that Peshawar, the capital of the North West Frontier Province adjacent to the tribal areas, the inspector general of police, Malik Naveed Khan, warned.

NYT

UN warns 'urgent work' needed to save Burma survivors

PHOTO taken on May 29 in Bangkok shows a badly damaged saddle-shaped apartment building. Burma's saddle has been in ruins since it was by thunderbolt. Both homes damaged by Cyclone "Nargis," spending their savings without any help from the government.

BANGKOK—A MONTH AFTER a cyclone left 133,000 people dead or missing in Burma (Myanmar), the UN's food agency chief warned Monday that "urgent work" is needed to help hundreds of thousands of survivors stave off hunger.

The United Nations estimates that that around 2.4 million people are in need of food, shelter, clean water or other basics in the area and only 60 percent are to receive any help at all.

Burma's isolationist military regime—despite suspicions of the outside world—has limited international help and restricted access for humanitarian workers in the hardest-hit parts of the low-lying Delta, where whole villages were washed away in the storm.

Jeremy Shermon, the World Food Program chief who visited Burma in the weekend, said progress had been made in receiving visas for international aid workers, whose expertise is needed to oversee the complex relief operation.

But she said aid workers still faced bureaucratic hurdles in moving to the delta, which suffered the brunt of Cyclone "Nargis" on May 2-3.

"What we need is a seamless global lifeline of relief supplies," Sherman said Monday, after her visit.

"Progress has been made, but urgent work remains on the ground [and] now."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wrapped up a visit here more than a week ago, saying that he had convinced junta leader Than Shwe to allow a full-scale foreign relief effort.

But aid agencies say access to the delta remains spotty, although most visas have been granted.

Burma flatly refused to accept help from US, British and French naval ships, which were laden with thousands of tons of supplies and tech-

nicians to deliver them.

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates has accused the regime of "criminal neglect" for refusing to allow in the waiting Boeing-sized deliver could have cost tens of thousands of lives.

"Unless the regime changes its approach, its policy must people will die," he said after a weekend regional security summit in Singapore.

Philippine Foreign minister Alberto Romulo urged the regime to allow military help, express from neighboring countries to deliver supplies. Insisting such help would be purely humanitarian.

AFP

The WORLD

Lilia Lorenzo B. Bunoz

Clinton grabs Puerto Rico consolation

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO—HILLARY CLINTON scored a hefty win in Sunday's Puerto Rico primary but Barack Obama was in sight of the Democratic White House nod after a fraction deal on Florida and Michigan.

The Co-Defense Of secretary of four million people held the third-last nominating contest heading to Tuesday's climax of the five-month primary season in Montana and South Dakota.

Obama said he had telephoned Clinton to congratulate her on the Puerto Rico result. With about 51 percent of the vote counted, she was ahead by 68 percent to 32, according to US television networks.

Addressing a cheering crowd in South Dakota, the Illinois senator praised his rival from New York as an "outstanding public servant" who would be a "great asset" for the Democrats come November's election.

"And whatever differences whatever differences Senator Clinton and I may have, well, those differences pale in comparison to the other side," he said.

In a bid to revive Clinton's hopes of securing a decisive lead in the national popular vote, 55 delegates-at-large and Guinest in Puerto Rico was lower than expected at about 18 percent.

But on RSBMC, Obama's campaign chair Terry McAuliffe still reclaimed the result as "very extraordinary."

"Kentucky before this, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, like hope running it up and I think it shows Hillary's strength to the fall," he said, insisting that she was the Democrats' best bet against Republican John McCain.

Puerto Ricans, who are US citizens but have no representation in Congress, can take part in party contests but do not have the right to vote in November's presidential election.

"Economic stupid is a colorful

DEMOCRATIC presidential hopeful New York Senator Hillary Clinton greets her supporters at a rally on the night of the Puerto Rico Democratic presidential primary in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on June 1. —AFP

Hillary Clinton: The long goodbye

WASHINGTON—HILLARY CLINTON HAS been true to her word. She has fought on relentlessly to the bitter end of the spoilt-limiting Democratic White House race.

Though it has apparently been clear for months that her rival Barack Obama, and not she, will be the Democratic nominee, the New York senator has refused to surrender.

After beating Obama by a margin of two to one in Puerto Rico Sunday, Clinton pressed her claim to undecided party grandees called "superdelegates" that she was the more popular candidate to take on Republican John McCain in November.

"I ask you to consider these questions—which candidate best represents the will of the people who voted in this historic [unprecedented] primary?" she appealed to the superdelegates in her victory speech.

"And which candidate is best able to lead our nation as our president in the face of unprecedented challenges at home and abroad? I am in this race because I believe I am that candidate, and I will be that president," she said.

But with the two final contests looming in Montana and South Dakota on Tuesday, Clinton's fierce fight is beginning to look more like a long goodbye. All the signs are that unaffiliated superdelegates are drifting to Obama.

That a despite some stunning victories racked up by Clinton in the past two months, including Tuesday's wins in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Kentucky.

Along the way she has tightened bonds with her faithful core coalition of women and working-class whites, and in the process played up Obama's weakness with these voters, which could hurt him in a general election.

But at the same time, with only a slither of delegates depriving Obama of the nomination, Clinton has appeared to accept that her White House dreams are fading, using wistful language candidates adopt when defeat looms.

"I feel so good about the process," Clinton said, as she leaned with a glass of Rioja wine from the night's last public interview on her campaign plane late Sunday.

"You know I feel like this has been a really positive, productive primary season in so many ways. I have really enjoyed the process of being able to go out and see this country anew."

It clothed in inevitable, as it seems, the former first lady now must look to her future.

Some analysts believe that she and husband Bill Clinton, the consummate political couple, are convinced that Obama cannot beat McCain in November.

With that in mind, are they already looking at a possible Clinton run in 2012, and want to pile up as many votes as possible to demonstrate that she is the best person to run?

Others take Clinton at her word, that the single feels a deep obligation to the 17 million people who voted for her to carry on to the end.

At every campaign event, Clinton is draped by supporters on the stage that, many of them middle-aged women who see a kindred spirit, allow her decades in the political crossfire.

But critics will look back on the former first lady's campaign as a metaphor for all that they reject in her family's political style.

Those who suppose them believe the Clintons' fiercely-loyalist style is more about preserving their own unique political gladiatorial than advancing the interests of the Democratic Party.

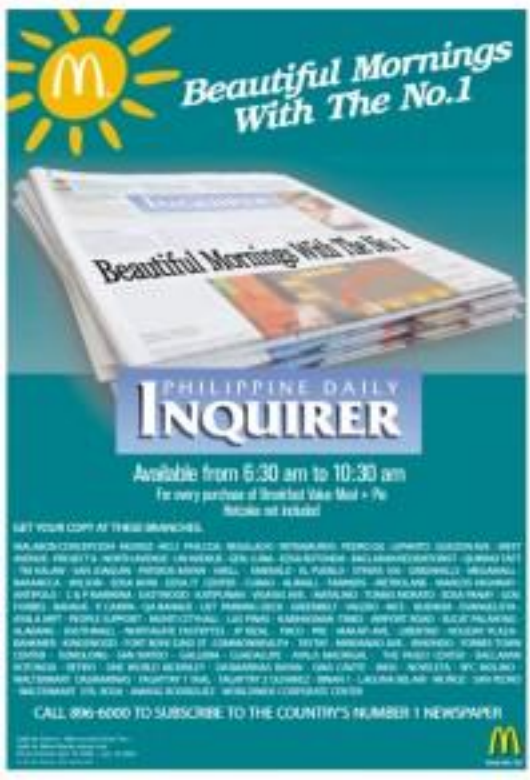
Critics still see Clinton as a divisive figure and some Obama supporters also argue the Clintons have highlighted their man's race, in a bid to turbocharge him as a "black" candidate made to a political liberty.

However, the first term Illinois senator went to have out-organized the uncefeated Clinton election machine...at one stage pulling off a stunning win of 11 straight nominating wins.

Whatever his future plans, however she finally leaves the race, Clinton can claim a string of pulverizing accomplishments.

She can legitimately claim to have taken a White House run further than any other woman in US history, and likely shattered some barriers for women who come after her.

And Clinton perhaps has also smashed out of the shadow of Bill, the only Democrat elected to two White House terms since Franklin D. Roosevelt, and become a future political figure in her own right. —AFP



Hezbollah hands over Israeli soldiers' remains

KAQUEBA, LEBANON—HEZBOLLAH SAID on Sunday it had returned the remains of Israeli soldiers killed in a 2006 war with Israel, which handed over a Lebanese man who had completed a jail term on charges of spying for the group.

The exchange increased speculation of progress in indirect talks between Israel and Hezbollah, a powerful Shiite Islamist group, over a broader prisoner swap. Lebanese political sources said last Monday that the talks had made some progress.

Shiites Hez, released after a six-year jail term, was greeted by Hezbollah officials in the southern village of Naqoura, where the group unexpectedly announced the release of the soldiers' remains.

"We today are handing over some of the remains of a number of Israeli soldiers who were killed in the July war and who the Israeli army left in Lebanon," Hezbollah senior official Wafiq Safa said upon Nasr's arrival.

A bus was placed in a vehicle belonging to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for delivery to Israel.

An Israeli military spokesperson said the remains would be inspected by security forces and undergo forensic examinations.

A panel had been appointed "that will be responsible for directly contacting the bereaved families whose soldiers' body parts are suspected to be among the remains transferred," the spokesperson said.

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said in a Jan. 13 speech his group had the heads, hands and legs of soldiers left on the battlefields of the 34-day 2006 war.

The conflict was touched off by the group's capture of two soldiers during a raid into Israel. Hezbollah said it had captured the soldiers to negotiate the release of prisoners to Israel including the long-held Samir Quntar.

"We are looking forward in the near future, the very near future, to the return of our prisoners ... at the forefront of them, the hero Sarah Quntar," Hezbollah official Sheikh Nabil Qaouk said in a rally to mark Nasr's release.

Nasr did not speak to reporters but vow that all Lebanese prisoners, including Quntar, would be released soon.

Nasr, who had been held at Hemes Prison in central Israel, arrived in Lebanon in an ICRC vehicle. Well-wishers threw rice and flowers at him as he entered his home village of Bednayeh.

"God willing very soon, we will witness the return of the Lebanese prisoners," Nasr, wearing a Hezbollah scarf, said.

A Lebanese political source said Sunday's exchange "could not be separated" from negotiations to secure the broader prisoner swap, which would include the soldiers captured in a raid into Israel.

A UN-appointed mediator, believed to be a German intelligence official, is seeking to negotiate an exchange.

Israel holds about 20 Lebanese, including Quntar. His release is widely seen as crucial to any deal. Hezbollah has refused to say whether the two soldiers are dead or alive.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, on an official visit to Lebanon, said: "We are of course very pleased ... that a first exchange has taken place, a first step. I hope that this will rather in a positive dynamic that will lead to further results." —Reuters

WHAT'S INSIDE
Serbs surge forward; Nadal shackles rival /A26

SPORTS
Editor Tobbie S. Melendres Assistant Editor Ronnie T. J. Ochoa

65 days to the 29th Summer Olympics

Pacman 'shuffle' to baffle Diaz

By Roy Luarca

A BUZZER Manny Pacquiao awaits it out using brave glares at the Wild Card gym in Hollywood under the watchful eyes of Filipino trainer Bulong Fernandez...at

Tañamor cops gold in Taiwan tilt / A24

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PBA: Williams, Se face possible suspensions

By Jasmine W. Payo

STA. LUCIA STAR BELLE WILLIAMS AND Alex Se, former Shoxer Se face possible suspensions on top of fines for fighting in a fight during the Purefoods-Llamado game in the Stanley Cup Eastern Conference last Sunday.

Executive director Rikki Santos said the two have been summoned by commissioner Sonny Barrios to explain their sides today as a result of their third-quarter clash that landed the Shoxers' 99-93 overtime triumph over the Purefoods at the Araneta Coliseum.

Williams was fined $5,000 after he was caught in a punch at 10:25 guard Patrick Aboitiz during a loose ball scramble with 4:07 remaining left in the period.

As the two players disputed possession on the floor, he planted a knee on Williams' face, thus his fine. Payo is the only Shoxer guard remaining on the Express roster.

Se, who escaped with only a flagrant foul, will report to league officials at 3 p.m. today. Williams, slapped with a technical foul for unsportsmanlike, will give his account an hour later.

Meanwhile, 6ft2 guard Gee Devil earned the Player of the Week citation from the Smart Gilas PBA Press Corps for his consistent form as the Express' back-to-back wins recently.

"It was Gary who actually made the difference in our offense," said coach Bo Perasol, after the Express doubled to 8-5 for a share of second place with PUREFOODS.

Devil, who struggled early in the conference due to injuries, finished his old rivalry from by firing 20 points in the Express' 126-109 win against the Barako Bull Welcoders.

Sustaining his rhythm four days later, the 6-foot-3 shooter came up with 24 points in a 99-95 overtime escape over the Purefoods.

"He was seemingly going through the motions, so Bo and I intensely ready to the conference," said he would be that he was still finding his way around," said Roland.

Glorani lifts Lady Archers over FEU cagebelles

By Cordell P. Tupas, Contributor

LA SALLE DESTROYED the Ateneo Lancers' 69-71 death of today's ability to the women's quarterfinals of the Men Summit tonight with a 77-73 opens in overtime yesterday at the FEU Gym.

Angeli Avellana added a triple with 29 seconds left that proved to be the game-winning basket as the Lady Archers forged a semifinal showdown with University of Santo Tomas.

The Tigresses erased their 9-point deficit. Lady Blazers, 83-90, with Wincha Bautista and Benita Bermoncino combining for 31 points.

Glorani finished with 26 points, including six of La Salle's 18 points in the extra session, while Jeanine Abes-Abes, who drained a triple to tie the game at 72, wound up with 14.

The Lady Tamaraws, unbeaten in the elimination round, came back from 31-38 to force overtime at 67-all.

FEU was paced by Stranderne Miranda, who flirted with a triple-double by tallying 19 points, nine rebounds and 12 assists, and Jovelyn Borja who added 20.

Philippine College of Criminology, despite scoring only two points in the second quarter, found enough firepower in the final half to stun Centro-rivals of the Philippines, 53-50.

PCCs set up a duel with Adamson, winner by default over Ateneo.

The junior quarterfinals are scheduled today while the knockout stage of the men's tournament gets going Thursday at the West Coliseum with UAAP champ La Salle, winner of last year's edition, battling Feati at 2 p.m.

Jose Rizal and University of the East clash at 4 p.m. in one of two marquee quarterfinal duels getting UAAP and UniAP action.

Brawn, fresh from winning in the United States, and Mapua collide in the other UAAP-NCAA showdown Sunday.

HARRY Talaman brings home gold medal from Taiwan. AFP

Tañamor fires first salvo in Beijing buildup

By Dennis U. Eros, Inquirer Libre

LIGHT-FLYWEIGHT HARRY TAÑAMOR believes that his best is yet to come after punching his way to the gold medal in the first International Boxing Association (AIBA) President's Cup which ended last Saturday night at the Ritzcheung Stadium in Shijiazhuang City, Taiwan.

"My coaches and I need to do some gridding up on my footwork and movements," said Talaman in Filipino yesterday. "I think I can beat Jordan in the Beijing Olympics."

A sergeant in the Philippine Army, Talaman – the lone SP boxing bet in the Summer Games – battled Jawatha Thomas of Cameroon to win, 17-4, in the 48-kg finals.

Beijing Olympic qualifiers are active in the President's Cup, which was held in honor of AIBA president Dr. Wu Ching-kuo.

Despite his win, the 29-year-old Talaman acknowledges great competition.

For one, China's Zhou Zhiming, considered the world's No. 1 in the light flyweight class, didn't compete in the week-long slugfest.

"I really wanted Zhou but China didn't send a team," said Talaman, who lost to the Chinese in their gold-medal bout in the World Boxing Championships last November in Chicago.

Talaman's new-found confidence can be traced to his two-month training in Havana, Cuba, under Cuban master Diagoberto Pinto Rodal and longtime coach Blas Duval.

En route to the finals, Talaman thumped Edmund Bernardez of Venezuela, 13-11, before outscoring Mongolian Purevdorj Gendsuren, 9-4, in the semifinals.

Other Beijing-bound Olympic ring wins action in the 48-kg division were Rafkjon Sultanov of Uzbekistan, Jack Villie of Papua New Guinea, Serzhan Zhakupov of Kazakhstan and Jalil Umarov of Namibia.

"It will be foolish to say that winning the President's Cup will result in an automatic ticket in Beijing," said Ganja, who accompanied Talaman to Taiwan).

But Talaman was solid in winning the President's Cup should silence his critics.

Many are saying that I'm already over the hill," he said. "But they don't know me."

National squad qualifying tees off at Valley

By Mayang R. Castillo

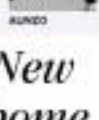
ANTIPOLO—A 72-HOLE QUALIFYING duel will determine the non-players who will form the nucleus of the Philippine team to two prestigious international events will be held starting today at the challenging fourth course of the Valley Golf Club here.

Reinhard Aurich, who won the RP Amateurs Sunday in Bacolod, headlines a host of first-flight players who include Mark Fernando, Andrew Fernando and Jared Abella, who were all members of last year's team that played in the Singapore and Hong Kong and the Southeast Asian Games.

Those who finished in the top 16 places in the RP Am classification tee last week at the Mariquita layout in Bacolod will have also been invited with Justin Limjap and Ivan Lee up. RP Taipans opting out.

Limjap, a Bacolod native like Taipans, is in his senior year in La Salle, while Taipans, who retired from top-tier competition despite finishing second to Aurich, is pursuing a home office job at The Orchard.

Aurich was not in Bacolod but earned outright seeding because of a strong showing in Malaysia, while Dennis Barcelona was also given the home privilege after outscored place finish in the Malaysian tournament.



AURICH

Swim row sad reflection on RP sports

CLEAN LIVING

Marvindo R. Dilayo

THE SWIMMING DISPUTE BETWEEN A group of parents and Philippine Amateur Swimming Association president Mark Joseph is fast losing the spirit of swimming.

It is also a sad reflection on the overall state of this country's sports programs.

There is simply too much bickering among sports leaders that it is depressing the athletes' morale as well as their future.

That's why I honour this case, labeling it as some the infighting in other national sports associations such as that of basketball, billiards, boxing and others. I feel that more of these NSA officials are taking their portfolio for prestige and to be able to travel.

On the conflict in swimming, Jose Ong, spokesperson of the parents, coaches and swimmers, claimed that Joseph has been illegally holding the position of Pasa president for the past three years. She said the bar walked out from Philippine Olympic Committee to order new elections "because it was the POC that installed Joseph to the post."

Said Ong: "We parents, coaches and club owners are urging the POC to immediately order out the elections [for regional directors] and another election for president, pursuant to the agreement agreed upon when Joseph was installed as head of Pasa."

However, the POC is not keen on meddling in the swimming controversy, saying the Pasa should settle the conflict itself because it is an "internal" problem.

POC chairman Jose Cojuangco, Jr. said the POC has no hand in the elections of national sports associations such as that of swimming.

Cojuangco added that Joseph must also submit a report to the POC.

"Mark said he has already complied, but as far as I'm concerned, I haven't seen any report to the POC board, unless I was absent on the day he submitted it," said Cojuangco.

For his part, Joseph said he would answer all the charges brought by the group once he returns from an official trip abroad. Concurrently, the POC deputy secretary general Joseph was a participant in International Olympic Committee events in Hungary and the United States.

Among others, he was accused of collecting enrollment fees from swimmers, coaches and wishing to join the Pasa.

The group wants Joseph to produce a 6-annual statement that will show how the money collected by Pasa was spent.

Rules to Senate President Manny Villar for supporting moves to increase government allotment to for sports.

Though celebrating he is in good shape when it comes to running sports programs, he said — it the opening of the coveted Milo National Open Track and Field Championships at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex—he is willing to sit down with sports leaders to improve the state of local sports.

"We may not be spending a lot on sports but its strategic go beyond. It's relative to the whole country," he said. "The only way by which the pride and dignity of the Filipinos are restored is through sports."

I would also like to congratulate the meet's chief organizer, athletics president Go Teng Kok for a job well done. POC head Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, PSC commissioner Eric Lecaros and PSC executive director Fr. Vicente Ito for adding kudos to the effort with their presence. And to all the athletes who took part in the tradition, marbuhay!

Wanted: New RP Open home

By Mayang R. Castillo

THE PHILIPPINE OPEN, ASIA'S oldest national golf championship, does not have a home for its 53rd edition to be played early next year.

Eddie Torres, the National Golf Association of the Philippines' chair of tournaments, is busy looking for possible venues that will be the open's temporary home with Black Watch's Kate course set to undergo an irrigation upgrade later this year.

Among the venues being considered are the golf courses of Alabang Country Club, Manila Southwoods, Canlubang Golf and Country Club in Laguna.

According to Torres, Valley management had by-laws Bong Tiu'shen loan admitted some time ago. About hosting the Open again for the first time since 1996, the tournament Emirate Pavilion was the event.

The South course has undergone a massive renovation, becoming an all-weather layout while retaining its toughness such as long, tree-lined holes.

Considering, meanwhile, has become a strong candidate because it basically has the same "ambiance" as that of the East course with carabao grass fairways and small, slick greens.

With Black East will be out of contention for two years as the post-irrigation work immediately after the Open. If NG staffing will be done there before at a time to give members the chance to still play the par-72 gem.

Torres also announced that he has also been tasked by the NGAP to sit on the negotiating table for the renewal of the golf body's contract with the Asian Tour, which ran the Open for the last three years.

QC youth shooters triumph

QUEZON CITY'S PROMISING SHOOTERS bagged seven gold medals to raise out Tagaytay City for the team crown in the 1st SM Mercapital National Youth Shooting Championships over the weekend at the PNRA Range of the Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

Arlene Palma scored QC's first gold in an air pistol (boys) title, but it was Ocampo Marcie Eulenio's two-gold romp in air pistol, including the open category, that clinched the title for national shooter Hey Government's QC squad over Tagaytay, which collected six golds.

"I take my hats off to our shooters," said QC Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista. "They made our city proud. I'm confident they'll become international champions."

Jason, Arlene's brother, also copped a gold medal in the shotgun trap (boys, 100 4-3 10-4, in the air rifle event.

Other team's owners, Team Mandaluyong, Muntinlupa, Makati and Marikina, as the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh in the team competition, respectively.

QC sports director Gerry Peñaranda receives the trophy from PSC commissioner Joey Morales (right) while Tin Padilla (left) and QC shooters look on.

BY TOP CHOICE

CELTICS VERSUS LAKERS

Who's got the edge?

THE BOSTON CELTICS AND THE Los Angeles Lakers will resolve their 3-month rivalry beginning Thursday night in Boston (Friday Philippine time) for the 12th time overall and the first since 1987, when the Lakers beat the Celtics in the Finals' marquee showdown. The winner is a game away from glory. The Celtics won in 1984 for their eighth straight victory over Los Angeles in the finals, dating back to 1959, but the Lakers broke through in 1985.

Here's a look at the respective squad's starting lineups:

CENTER: Kendrick Perkins vs Pau Gasol. The Lakers wouldn't be here without their midseason acquisition of Gasol from Memphis. He's signed paper for a big man, making him an overachiever. He's the triangle offense, and is shooting 53 percent in the postseason while averaging 17.7 points. Perkins made 61.5 percent of his shots in the regular season and had some strong games in the Eastern Conference finals, including an 18-point, 14-rebound performance in Game 5. Edge: Lakers.

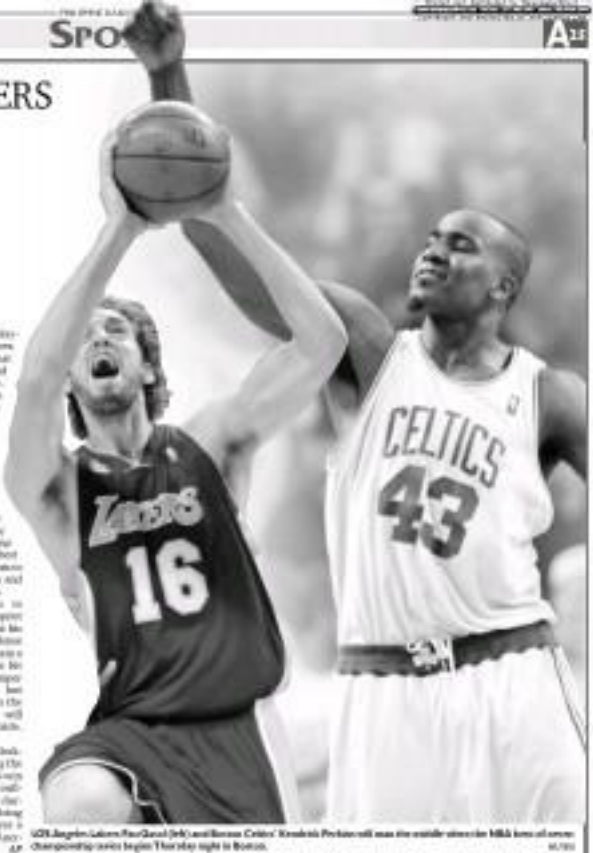
POWER FORWARDS: Kevin Garnett vs Lamar Odom. The Defensive Player of the Year, Garnett increased his offensive production in the conference finals, averaging 22.8 points in Boston's wins over Detroit. He controlled the boards most of the time to offset strikes the Celtics go. The versatile Odom was non-existent against San Antonio in the Western finals, but rebounded with strong performances in the last two games. Edge: Celtics.

SMALL FORWARDS: Paul Pierce vs Vladimir Radmanovic. Possibly in the NBA finals in his 10th year with Boston, Pierce is set to face his hometown team. He has shown in the playoffs he can still be a potent scorer, notably in his 41-point effort in Game Cleveland to Game 7 of the second round, and has become an underrated defender. Radmanovic is a good perimeter shooter who doesn't do much else. Edge: Celtics.

SHOOTING GUARDS: Ray Allen vs Kobe Bryant. Allen seemed to break out of his shooting slump in the final two games of the conference finals, averaging 25 points and going 8-of-14 from 3-point range. Bryant, a tenacious defender, will continuously test the challenge of trying to get that chance started again. He has been at his best in the playoffs, averaging 31.9 points to lead all players in the postseason and shooting 51 percent. Edge: Lakers.

POINT GUARD: Rajon Rondo vs Derek Fisher. Fisher had a back spasm in the conference finals, but his postseason experience, solid defense and courage to take big shots remain a comfort to the Lakers even when his shot isn't falling. Rondo's poor jumper was especially off late in the last round, when he shot 10-of-35 in the final three games. The Lakers will make him beat them from the outside. Edge: Lakers.

COACHES: Doc Rivers vs Phil Jackson. Rivers did a great job molding the Celtics' new parts into a 66-win team. But he's appeared to lose confidence in some of his role players during the postseason. Jackson, doing only of his best coaching jobs, went a 10th title that would break Red Auerbach's record. Edge: Lakers. AP



LOS Angeles Lakers Pau Gasol (left) and Boston Celtics' Kendrick Perkins roll near the outside since the NBA best-of-seven championship series begins Thursday night in Boston. AP/EPA

KOBE Bryant: Complementing his shooting with tenacious defense.

Big Three give Boston chance to get back at LA after 21 years

THE THING MOST STORIED FRANCHISE returns with the 12th NBA finals matchup between the teams. Boston's 106-35, 12-81 series the three times the Los Angeles (57-25, 12-5) took the last two with victories in 1985 and 1987. The Celtics hadn't been back since until adding the All-Star trio of Kevin Garnett, Paul Pierce and Ray Allen to a league-best 66 wins. But the Lakers have been the best team in the postseason, winning 12-of-13 games behind league MVP candidate Kobe Bryant, who was three miles from 2000-2002. A victory gives Lakers coach Phil Jackson a 10th title, which would break a tie with the Celtics' Red Auerbach.

SERIES: Celtics—1 Kendrick Perkins (7.2 ppg, 6.8 rpg) Pierce (20.5 ppg, 6.8 rpg), Allen (18.6 ppg, 4.1 rpg), Garnett (15.1 ppg, 8.5 rpg), Rondo (9.1 ppg, 5.5 apg), Eddie House (8.1 ppg, 2.1 rpg), James Posey (5.1 ppg, 3.0 rpg), Leon Powe (3.1 ppg, 2.3 rpg), Tony Allen (2.1 ppg, 1.1 rpg), Brian Scalabrine (1.7 ppg, 1.1 rpg), Sam Cassell (1.6 ppg, 0.9 apg), James Gibson (0.7 ppg, 0.6 rpg), Glenn Davis (0.1 ppg, 0.1 rpg). Lakers—Bryant (31.9 ppg, 5.6 rpg, 5.6 apg), Gasol (17.7 ppg, 11.6 rpg), Odom (11.3 ppg, 9.1 rpg, 3.6 apg), Fisher (9.1 ppg, 2.3 rpg, 3.2 apg), Vladimir Radmanovic (6.9 ppg, 3.3 rpg), Sasha Vujacic (6.6 ppg, 1.9 rpg), Luke Walton (5.3 ppg, 3.3 rpg, 3.3 apg), Jordan Farmar (3.1 ppg, 1.3 apg), Adam Morrison (2.7 ppg, 1.9 rpg), Josh Powell (2.3 ppg, 1.7 rpg), Ronny Turiaf (1.7 ppg, 1.9 rpg).

SEASON SERIES: Celtics, 3-0, winning by a combined 22 points. However, both meetings came in late 2007, long before the Lakers acquired Gasol to give Bryant some much-needed help. Bryant averaged 35 points but shot just 32.6 percent against Boston. Odom managed only 9.0 points, also hitting one third of his shots. Garnett averaged 21.5 points and 11.5 rebounds, while Pierce scored 26.3 per game, including 35 in the Celtics' 120-91 romp in Los Angeles on Dec. 26, when the Lakers struggled while wearing throwback "Mod" shorts in the first half.

Key matchup I: Allen vs Bryant. Just when Allen appeared to snap out of his postseason shooting slump, he now has to work against Bryant, a tenacious defender who will try to keep Allen from getting in a rhythm. Bryant leads all players in postseason scoring, and after taking apart San Antonio in the Western Conference finals, he now has the attention of the Celtics, who had issues in the lowest-shooting percentage in the league this season.

Key matchup II: Garnett vs Odom. Garnett made 59 percent of his shots in the two wins over the Lakers, and should have a strength advantage when he goes into the post. But he often prefers to lay out the perimeter, where he loses that edge. Odom, also versatile enough to play Pierce, needs to contribute more than he did against Boston during the regular season. AP

RAY Allen: Averages 23 points in last two games.

All set for Liga Pilipinas maiden season

LIGA Pilipinas CEO and president Hoi Edu (fourth from the left) poses with some of the team officials, led by Mayor Randal Tolentino (Tagaytay Caste Heroes), Danny Sona (Bagsic Victory), Gov. Dy Sandiwa (Rocas Del Bravehearts), Raul Alcaraz (Cebu Mints), David Reyes (Iloilo Mang Inasal), Erwin Gerosina (Laguna Stallions), Butch Hugo (Ijas Bandera), Gov. Boy Herrera (Pila Dr Herrera), Tito Palma (Oceanic Coral), Wilson Co (Pagadian Explorers).

A formal launching at the Casino Español General Bell House in Cebu City is set tonight with team owners, board members, and league officials attending the regional amateur basketball tournament.

Expected to grace the launch are BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas president Manny V. Pangilinan, co-chair Ricky Vargas and outgoing executive director Patrick Gregorio.

Liga CEO and president Noli Edu presided over a meeting yesterday where he announced the holding of a team owners-only basketball game at the Cebu Coliseum at 9 a.m. today followed by a VIP lunch at the Casino Español Hotel.

The full schedule will be announced to the teams at 2 p.m.

Cecil F. Espina, Cesi Orthodox

Kings slay Knights, halt two-game slide

AJEET SINGH SCORED A PERsonal-best 29 points and grabbed 17 rebounds as the Kings rallied past the Knights, 77-68, over the weekend at the end of second round action in the 2008 PBL Goodwill Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

Trailing 56-48 early in the third frame, Singh, unhindered The Arena, combined with Vladimir Singh to give the Kings the lead for good, 58-58.

The two bolted a two-game skid by the defending champion Kings.

Moreover the second-seeded Kings erased the twice-to-beat edge in the semifinals.

It was also a fitting redeemer for coach Mike Advincula, who returned from the United States after attending a training camp with the San Beda Red Lions.

Bridoch Mahmud shot 27 points for the Knights, who slipped to last place with a 2-4 record behind the 3-3 card of the Kings.

In the second game, Grand Danyaman scattered 33 points to lead Jet Boniface to a 77-71 double overtime win over host Blue Blooks.

Danyaman also had 14 rebounds to cop his impressive performance.

Ryel Guanzon had a run-triple double of 22 points, 21 rebounds and 10 assists for the Boniface, who tied the Kings' win-loss record.

Arrivers to the PBL contingent, finishing with the semifinal round.

SPORTS

RAFAEL Nadal cheers and fist pumps after a point against countryman Fernando Verdasco. AFP

Serbs surge forward; Nadal shackles rival

PARIS—SERBIA ENGAGED THE French Open Sunday when Ana Ivanovic saved and then Ackets Jankovic bubbled into the quarterfinals before Novak Djokovic bounced another and to the coffin of home hopes.

As the Serb title combated to scythe through the field, a marvelous Rafael Nadal extended his unbeaten streak at Roland Garros to a jaw-dropping 25 matches.

Second seed Ivanovic played with the urgency of a woman late for a lunch appointment as she ruthlessly dismantled Czech Iveta Gelbovica, 6-4, 6-0, in 54 minutes on Court Philippe Chatrier.

While Ivanovic's win was painfully easy, Jankovic's was just downright painful.

Jankovic needed a 30-minute medical time-out after game three of the second set against Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska before she crawled past the finishing line with a 6-3 7-5 victory over the veteran coach told Reuters on telephone from Kingston. "If he wants to, maybe he'll do a way of telling me."

Hibbs, who for years had tried to push Bolt toward the 400 metres as his second event, acknowledged that the sprinter would run both the 100 and 200 meters at the Jamaica trials.

"He is going to double in the trials because I'll be doesn't, he would be forcing himself to make a decision this month about the Olympics," Hibbs said.

A 200 meters race in Ostrava, Czech Republic on June 12 will be Bolt's only run over the longer distance before the trials, his agent Nicky Emmins said.

Reuters

LEGEND Bolt: Here record holder. AFP

Lee snatches plum from 9 shots down

MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH Carolina—Seon Hwa Lee didn't expect she'd be accepting the Glen Tilson trophy from two-time runner-host Annika Sorenstam on Sunday.

But when she rallied

Lee, though, took advantage of a stunning collapse from Sophie Gustafson, and somehow Hall of Famer Kindy Webb aims a third par-part in the playoff. The result was Lee's third US LPGA Tour title and one of the richest purses, $300,000 as women's golf.

"There's lots of luck," said Lee, nine strokes behind when her round began.

The comeback was the second-largest in US LPGA Tour history, surpassed only by 10-stroke rallies from 1984 and Sorenstam in 2001.

Lee shot a 67 to finish at 14-under 274. In the playoff at No. 16, Lee two-putted for par from 45 feet before Webb's second as ...

The 22-year-old South Korean rose in the world to-last group, but had no plans or a chances change. She believed a solid performance would give her confidence for next week's major, the US LPGA Championship. AP

FASTEST MEN ON EARTH

Bolt-Powell duel looms in Jamaica

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA—THE TWO fastest 100 meters sprinters of all-time could race to Jamaica later this month.

Nine 100 meters would record holder Usain Bolt will race both the 100 and 200 at the June 27-29 Jamaican Olympic trials in Kingston, his coach said on Sunday.

Beating his rivals in the 100 is admittedly to be conquered Asafa Powell, the world record holder until Bob clocked 9.72 seconds at the Reebok Grand Prix in New York on Saturday.

The meeting could be the year's most anticipated 100 meters before the Beijing Olympics in August, although Powell and Jamaican would champion Tyson Gay are also due to race in July in London.

Powell and Bolt have run the seven fastest times ever recognized in the event.

Powell has recorded five of them, including the former world record of 9.74 seconds, and the 23-year-old Bolt two has their have never raced over 100 meters.

The lanky Bolt has run times of 9.76, 9.82 and 9.72 seconds within the last month.

"I'll be doubling soon [in the Olympics], definitely," Bolt told Reuters in New York after setting the world record.

But his coach Stiva Hibbs said nothing had been finalized.

"It is not really his decision to make."

Perry bags 10th title, boosts Ryder Cup chances

DUBLIN, OHIO—KENNY Perry produced a near flawless final round to win the Memorial Tournament by two shots and jump to fifth in the American Ryder Cup standings on Sunday.

Perry carded a three-under-par 69 in gusty winds at Muirfield Village to collect his 10th victory on the PGA Tour.

He finished at eight-under 280, two strokes ahead of Canadian Mike Weir (71), Sweden Justin Rose (71), American Jerry Kelly (71) and Australian Matthew Goggin (74).

Goggin took a three-shot lead in the final round, but successive bogeys at the first four holes before settling down to play solidly the rest of the way.

Perry charged to the front with a brilliant front nine, picking up three birdies, and his win never looked coming home, his only blemish a bogey at the par-four 17th, where he missed a five-foot putt.

"It was probably one of the greatest rounds I remember as a long time, playing in tough conditions," the 47-year-old told reporters after becoming only the second player after Tiger Woods to win the Jack Nicklaus-hosted event on three.

"I shot three-under on the front nine, and it could have been six-under I had it close on every hole. My iron shots were pinches.

"I've had an unbelievable month. I'm hitting my driver terrific, my irons are on the money and I've got great touch with the putter."

Perry, who collected $1,080,000 to vault to fifth on the PGA Tour money list, has an elite interest in events the Ryder Cup team for the September three-days against Europe, because it will be played at Valhalla as his home state of Kentucky.

Reuters

GRAB! Perry. (Near Bunker) AP

3-team men's softball fight seen; Rizal girls catch Lipa

LIPA CITY—A THREE-WAY BATTLE for the men's division shaped up yesterday as host Lipa City, Ist Bauan and Zambonga City protested their advances to today in Day 4 of the Nationals Open softball championships being played at Lipa different venues here.

Enjoying their best year in this annual tournament, the Metropolitan swept their doubleheader schedule to post Group A with five outright wins while the Armies and the Zamboangueños shared the Group B lead with similar 3-0 cards.

Today Pampanga close to five runs with a grand slam in the ninth inning and a solo homer earlier in the fifth as Lipa City first demolished Marikina City, 7-4, before escaping later in the day to clobber Bulacan State University, 9-1.

Apple Nuñez, who also homered against Marikina, duplicated the feat against Bulacan with a solo shot in the fourth inning as Lipa City secured a win in the four-team page system enrolled event.

The Armies outshooed Laguna Province with an 8-1 regulation thrashing win while the Zamboangueños ended Lipa/TCDC's great rolling spree with a 7-1 triumph.

BSU and Zamboanga were playing at press time with the winner joining Lipa City in the page system finals.

Meanwhile, Rizal Province caught up with Group B leader Adamson Lipa after a regulation four-inning 19-0 rout of Prime/Dirk of Baguio City.

Former Bb. Gil Emmanuelle Feong, seeking to capture the lookout event, highlighted a perfect four-for-four at the plate with a solo home run in the second home to push the Pilipinas to their third victory in seven tries.

Adamson Manila, the other half of the two teams fielded in by Lady Falcons coach Ina Santiago here, needed only five batters to shut out Polytechnic University of the Philippines, 9-0.

In other games, defending men's champ Cebu picked up its second win in four starts with a 13-3 romp over Cavite City (1-4) while Laguna improved to 2-1 with a 10-4 rout of BSU, which absorbed a fourth straight loss.

Steve Allen, Cecil Ybañez

KARATE CHAMPS

Members of the ASG Bernie Karate-Kan Barotac City with team officials and supporters on the done of the recent 2nd PBP National Age Group and Open Karate-do Championships in the Pinoy Aquatic Stadium. Among the winners in the event that drew 450 participants were karate [sparring] silver medalists Mario Victor Lucero (seniors), bronze David Lucero (seniors +75kg), Marianne Bruce Silva (seniors +55kg), and bronze Reuben Jan David Lucero (open), Ms. Theresa Alabastro (open) and Stephanie Uberas (seniors -50kg). Other members of the team broadening experience Edilberto Arcenio were Michael Robin Lucero, John Aris Tapia, Louie Wenceslao and Elizalde Alas.

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BUSINESS

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Non-GIR forex stock down to $9.03B

BSP continues to sell dollars to temper peso's sharp depreciation

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- **PNB sells** stake in insurance firm /B6
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WHILE MY GUITAR GENTLY FEEDS ME
Guitar maker Ricardo de la Rosa, 58, puts the finishing touches on an instrument that not only puts food on the table but brings music to his ears. De la Rosa earns the knack at New Suning's Guitar Factory in Ibayo, Pajak, Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. —JOY R. CANCIO

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS' FOREIGN exchange stock outside its official foreign reserves retreated from record highs as the regulator turned into a net seller of US dollars to temper the peso's sharp depreciation.

Based on the latest official report, the BSP's outstanding foreign currency swaps that had not yet been booked as part of the gross international reserves (GIR) had dwindled to $9.03 billion as of end-April, lower than the $11.33 billion posted last March.

The foreign exchange swaps hit an all-time high of $13 billion in January and February as the peso's rapid rise against the US dollar prompted the BSP to siphon off excess US dollars from the spot foreign exchange market.

The peso's reversal began in earnest in March due to rising food and fuel prices. Since then, monetary officials have unloaded foreign exchange to support the local currency.

Despite its intervention to stop pare the peso, the BSP continued to record a steady rise in its GIR, which surged to a new record of $36.7 billion as end-April. The decline in the foreign currency swaps indicated that the local central bank was using its "unofficial" reserves to support the local currency without draining the "official" reserves, analysts said.

The central bank's effective "war chest"—referring to the GIR and the foreign exchange swaps combined—thus declined by about $4 billion or $45.73 billion as end-April from a peak of nearly $50 billion in January and February.

Over the past two years, the BSP has been using these swaps to mop up excess foreign exchange purchased from the Philippine Dealing System. These are dollars that the BSP owns, which it will get back months from now.

For the BSP, the use of swaps has become a monetary tool to ponder as its overnight borrowings and high-yielding special deposit accounts (SDAs).

Whether such monetary tools to remove excess liquidity in the system, inflation is expected to rise.

Inflation picks up when more money chases the same goods, effectively raising prices.

Through currency swaps, the BSP managed to siphon off and lock up nearly P400 billion in excess liquidity based on the current peso-dollar exchange rate. This was higher than the P279 billion the BSP mopped up using its overnight borrowing and P368 billion siphoned off through SDAs during the same period.

In conducting swaps, the BSP uses to US dollars to simultaneously buy and sell pesos from banks within a specific maturity date. It exchanges interest payments within a specified period. Upon maturity, the BSP will get back the dollars at a previously agreed rate.

The GIR is a key indicator of a

>>> B8 to 10

Peso may stay at 43:$1 in '08, hit 44:$1 in '09

AMERICAN INVESTMENT BANK Merrill Lynch expects the peso to trade within the 43 level against the US dollar throughout the year, before it slips to 44 at the end of next year due to "limited" central bank intervention and some currency-economic risks.

Yesterday, the peso firmed up at 43.313 from Friday's finish of 43.75 against the greenback, aided by a regional currency market that turned relatively buoyant as global oil prices eased below $130 per barrel.

Based on Merrill Lynch's latest quarterly forecasts, the peso is seen to trade at 43.50 in September and end this year at 43 against the greenback.

The local currency is projected to rebound to 42.50 by March next year, but slide back to the 44 level in the succeeding quarters, and end next year at 44 to the dollar.

"Higher inflation and risks of a relatively loose policy has made us relatively bearish on the Philippine peso," Merrill Lynch said in a commentary dated May 27.

"The BSP has hinted that policy could turn restrictive, but retains a neutral bias for now," the investment bank said. "Inflation risks are clearly higher, the positive surprises from fiscal consolidation could reverse and the current account surplus is expected to drop."

The local central bank's policy-making Monetary Board is set to discuss monetary settings this Thursday. The consensus view, based on an Inquirer poll of 10 banks, would be to token increase of 25 basis points in the BSP's overnight borrowing rate to curb sharply rising consumer prices.

"We plan to reassess our view ahead of the next monetary policy meeting given the sharp weakening in recent days," the report said.

Apart from the forthcoming monetary policy meeting, Merrill Lynch said other important Philippine data to monitor would be inflation, overseas remittances and the balance of payments.

Merrill Lynch said that the BSP has "limited intervention interest," which could result in a stronger US dollar against the peso.

A weaker peso, however, favors certain sectors like exporters as

>>> B10

Petron still cheap

I MUST APOLOGIZE TO THE 3.16 readers who remembered my last column, still called and asked me for the recipe for the sauce. I was about to send it when the editor pointed out that my contract with the business sours specifically that journalists are not allowed to divulge their secrets. Sorry about that.

In Iraq, the desperate forces decided to improve their relations with the Shiites and the Kurds by not stepping on football asterisk in your every goodwill. As the Americans were short of good players, they persuaded one of the Iraqis, who was very good, to help them out. With the score at 4-4, he scored the winning goal with seconds to spare. Pandemonium broke out, no one cared for his accent, "Guess what, asterisk. We were all square with seconds to go and I scored the winning goal. Everybody love me, the Yanks, the media and the fans."

"Wonderful," wrote his mother. Let me tell you about my day. You father won third in the chess and softball competitions and I was embedded and raped and your brother joined a gang of looters, all while you were having such a great time." The young Iraqi was very upset and wrote back, "What me I say mom, I'm so sorry." "Sorry, you're sorry," said his mom. "It's your fault we moved to New York in the first place."

My wife got a heap Tylenol-ed with the price from my credit card, accumulated over a decade. Unfortunately, it comes without a memory stick, which you have to buy. My spouse, who knows nothing about computer computers, asked me if I had a memory stick. "Yes," I said. "But I have forgotten how to use it."

* * *

On Friday, while the market was strong, there was a moment of selling of Petron by Pepi, who sold for millions and crossed another 20 million. The shares, which were 1% more trading days ago and P1.29 in February and March, suddenly tumbled to P1.11 offered. The result came out recently to it could be done. Then, it tumbled that on June 1, Petron had been deleted from the new Phisix along with three others stocks.

"There are certain funds, known as index funds, which have to be invested by the Phisix and in the same proportions. So when Petron was deleted last Friday, they had to sell, to swap for other Pepi has such funds and was selling for that reason. To this, they crossed another 86 million at P1.1 so it looks as if they have finished. When the shares were at P8, the risk factor was 136 (still, now at P1.1, it is 8 (top)."

Apart from the technical aspect, Ayala's investment made an effort to buy nineteen 40-percent stake in the company for P5,000 or P6.42 a share. The government would have needed P15 billion to match the offer, so it accepted it. [...] Standard and Morgan Stanley offered to match the offer but the previous month's strike led it will probably demand a higher price. An undisclosed source said that if a higher price is on the table, the government might follow suit. The bull is still in play.

Advance Investment is not the kind of investment company that likes to congratulate itself. Still this company in subsidiary Advance Global Special Situations, made the bid for the parent company is one of the wealth leading investment managers dedicated to emerging markets with a history of consistently outperforming the market. It focuses on special situations in globally emerge, where the local currency is considered undervalued over the long term.

Based in London, the business was started in 2002 by Australia and New Zealand Banking Group and manages $10.3 billion in pooled funds. Its management team was awarded top rankings by Standard & Poor's and Lipper. It was the Global Investor's Award for Investment Excellence in Emerging Markets Bonds in 2001 to 2006 and Global Investor's Emerging Markets of the Year Award in 2006. It will make an excellent partner for Petron with its wealth of experience in countries such as ours.

Recently, when traders are made for 20 percent or more of a company, the trader offer has to be extended to all parties but in this case, Ashmore's only bidding for the Ayalaowned. The oil companies are having a hard time trying to catch up with the ever-increasing price of oil, which has never risen doubled in a year. Even the recently P1 increase we last month's end this week, the increase was P1.50. But they are still behind the curve and I expect monthly increases to continue. Profit margin on the sale of petrol are so thin that first quarter profit fell by a third to P600 million.

Despite the drop to the 1st quarter, Petron's stated it would meet its financial and operating targets this year due to the contributions of its new petrochemical feedstock units. It should consider selling some of its valuable sites such as Makati itself and McKinley Road to property companies, as there is no sense sticking out of the city.

Petron built the first cracking unit of its kind in the world, converting black products into higher value LPG, propylene, toluene, xylene and benzene. Propylene is the raw material used to the manufacture of bottles, food packaging, electrical appliances and car bumpers. Benzene is used in synthetic yarn. These products have a much higher profit margin than selling petrol to your taxi, profits are registered to rise by about one-third, putting the shares on a prospective P/E of 7.3 for this year and 5.3 for next year. The P/E on the Phisix is 12.7.

I consider this almost zero risk with substantial upside in a few months. These are the odds I like and I recommend the shares, which I bought for myself at P1.14. Unfortunately since I wrote this article we bought the price has rebounded to P1.19 but it still has potential.

A limerick for Petron:

There was a young lady, Petron
Who married a guy Tolentino
They started about this
All the hydrocarbon
And since then, they haven't been here.

Eton seen venturing into resort development

Solid Group to spend P550M for projects

ELECTRONICS FIRM SOLID GROUP said its capital expenditure will reach P550 million this year for its property projects and cable business.

In a financial report, SGI said the amount would be set aside as its working capital for this year and would be used to complete phase 1 of its Tri-Tower residential condominium, the construction and development of a coal-estate project in China and the upgrade of its data and cable Internet and satellite equipment under Solid Broadband Corp.

SGI said the capex would be financed through a combination of internally generated funds and loans.

Zen Towers Corp., SGI's property subsidiary is undertaking its latest project, the Zen Tri-Towers condominium in Brixtal Alabang, which was estimated to cost P1.3 billion.

Also recently, SGI acquired Phil Hanxing Construction Inc. (PHCI), a Philippine company specializing in 3-5 hectare property project in a business district in Guangxi province in China.

SGI has purchased Phil Hanxing Construction Inc. (PHCI), which will own 51 percent of a property project in Nanning City, Guangxi province. The rest is part of a Chinese business partner's interest.

The project involves the construction of several multistorey buildings intended for residential, commercial and office use.

Part of the project is the construction of a Philippine Pavilion for the use of the Philippine government in China.

PHCI has already obtained Chinese government approval for its investment in the project.

"The overdue debt investment looks very promising, with China's booming real estate market and Solid's knowledge of the market in China. We believe the investments will be good for us," SGI president Ismail Lim earlier said.

— Elizabeth Sanchez-Lorenzo

Firm eyes first project in Calatagan, Batangas

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lorenzo

ETON PROPERTIES PHILIPPINES Inc., the property unit of tycoon Lucio Tan, is looking at launching its first resort project in the historic development market this year with a 50-hectare property in Calatagan, Batangas.

Eton president Danilo Ignacio told the business the resort project, which was still under study, would likely include hotel and residential developments.

"We plan to go into leisure-type developments for a niche market. Our initial studies showed that these types of projects offer significant growth potential as a result of the robust growth of the tourism industry," Ignacio said during their meeting visitors grew by 7.6 percent in the first six months of 2007 to 2.03 million from previous level.

Aside from the Lucio Tan Group's property in Calatagan, Eton also has a property in Bataan that can be used for this venture.

"Our company remains confident that its current inventory and its lineup of new projects will be received favorably by the market, given the steady increase in remittances from overseas Filipino workers, the low interest rate regime, increase in foreign tourist arrivals and an upsurge in BPO (business process outsourcing) office requirements. We firmly believe that the demand for our core business of providing quality residences to our customers will remain resilient," Ignacio said.

The company earlier said it would spend P18 billion on several projects, including condominiums such as Eton Residences Greenbelt in Makati, Eton Baypark in Manila, Eton Emerald Lofts in Ortigas, Bellevue Place in Pasong Tamo, Eton Parkviews Greenbelt in Makati, One Antheus Place in Manila, and mixed developments such as Eton Cyberpod Centris at the corner of Quezon Avenue and Edsa and Eton City in Sta. Rosa Laguna.

Insular Life profit up 38%

2007 PROVED TO BE AN EXCELlent year for The Insular Life Assurance Company Ltd. and its subsidiaries.

Insular Life assurance Co. and its subsidiaries reported a 38-percent growth in net income to P2.2 billion in 2007, from P1.6 billion a year ago.

Insular company Insular Life accounted for P1.8 billion, up by 50 percent from the P1.2 billion posted in 2006.

Gross island revenue rose by 14 percent to P33.2 billion on the back of bigger premiums and higher yields on investments. Gross premiums accounted for 67 percent or P8.9 billion, while investments income amounted to P9.4 billion.

"The growth in net assets in 2007 surged 18 percent to P67.7 billion, three financial performance showed up members' equity by 9.41 percent to P15.3 billion," Insular Life chair and CEO Nestle B. Ayllon reported at the recent annual Members Meeting of the company.

BIR expects lower collection from big firms in '08

Top revenue agency pegs tax take at P402.6B, down 6%

By Michelle V. Rosas

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue expects to collect less from the firms handled by its Large Taxpayers Service this year, mainly to the removal of some names from the list.

The BIR decided to trim the number of taxpayers serviced by its Large Taxpayers Service unit from 1,200 to 696 since the other 582 firms could be handled instead by revenue district offices.

The BIR thus expects to take in P402.6 billion in taxes from companies under its LTS unit, down 6 percent from the P429.86 billion collected last year.

Large taxpayers are supposed to account for close to half of the targeted tax collection this year at P860 billion.

A company is classified as "large" if it has a net worth of at least P300 million, pays an annual income and withholding tax of at least P1 million, and remits value-added tax of at least P1.62,500 a quarter.

But the shrinking of the 582 companies, which reportedly include Bank of the Philippine Islands and Unilever Philippines, does not mean they fell below the required tax requirements.

A BIR official who heads one of the RDOs in Metro Manila said the delisting of some large corporate clients from the coverage of the LTS was just intended to transfer some of the burden of collecting taxes to the RDOs.

RDOs handle smaller corporate clients and individuals within their area of responsibility.

The BIR official, however, said many heads of RDOs were against the transfer of some big clients to their jurisdiction as it would mean an increase in their collection targets.

Some of the firms removed from the list of the LTS were also not happy about the transfer to the RDOs.

They wouldn't receive that they would no longer get special privileges, such as faster auditing service by the BIR due to large taxpayers.

BIR Commissioner Lilian Bell could not be reached for comment as of press time. But Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran, who is tasked to oversee the collection performance of the BIR, said the decision to delist some firms was a strategy to help the entire BIR meet its full-year collection target.

The BIR is supposed to collect P860 billion in taxes this year, over 10 percent more than its target last year of P765.9 billion.

The country's largest revenue agency was given a high target despite having fell short of its goal last year, having collected only P713.6 billion.

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PSALM pays $263M of Napocor debts

2nd tranche of Miyazawa loans

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES Management Corp. has prepaid another 27.2 billion yen ($263 million) of National Power Corp.'s debts, mainly to trim the nation's yen exposure.

PSALM selling vice president for finance Lourdes Alonzo said the debt paid represented the second tranche of the Miyazawa loans that the Japanese government extended to Napocor in 1999 to finance a number of transmission projects.

"The move will reduce Napocor's obligations and will improve its debt to (gross domestic product) ratio from 34.39 percent in 2003 to 30.94 percent in 2007, as well as Napocor's debt to total (government-owned or -controlled corporation) debt ratio from 38.08 percent in 2003 to 35.15 percent in 2007," she said.

Aside from the savings on interest payments and guarantee fees, PSALM capital markets and risk management department head Nedelyn Ermitaño said the move effectively reduced Napocor's foreign exchange debt by 4 percent and lessened the peso component of the mix to 31 percent from 31 percent.

The maneuver lessens Napocor's liability profile by reducing the exposure of the company to foreign currency fluctuations," he said.

Last March 29, PSALM prepaid nearly 16.9 billion yen ($174 million) of Napocor's loans.

The loans swapped were extended in 1995 and 1997 by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (Formerly Economic Cooperation Fund [JBIC-OECF]) to handcraft several transmission projects, then under Napocor's jurisdiction.

Transmission operations had since been spun off to National Transmission Corp.

Two of the prepaid loans, amounting to 7.3 billion yen ($71.4 million) and 8.0 billion yen ($78.4 million), would fall due in 2027, while another loan worth 1.2 billion yen ($12 million) would mature in 2025.

The prepayment likewise covered accrued interest of 2.3 million yen ($26,000).

THE LUZA AT THE PALACE ISSUE SPOKES

Recent reports indicated that the President would step pushing for amendments to the Epira—or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

That has, I think, is the reason (all the same is the electricity) sector unwieldy.

For the past three years, some shadowy groups have been trying to derail the implementation of the Epira by some means.

Lately, they intensified the lobby to Congress to change the law.

After all, the Epira really needs major amendments. Why? Well, namely because it was never truly tried and tested! Why? Well, for the simple reason that it has yet to be fully implemented.

Really, such is the kind of government we have.

But anyway, also according to the news reports, the Luza men would can lessen in Congress, particularly those in the House of Representatives, to carve their energy and power interest to the calling of a "market-like" energy bill—preferably one that works.

I think I can begin to admire her already!

***

ANYWAY, what was the Luza's reason for such a major change of mind?

It was, according to the reports, this thing called "open access"—which is actually one of the main goals of the Epira.

Under "open access," electricity users (that's you and I, theoretically, but they are really just the big users such as all those malls the size of Venice) can buy electricity directly from suppliers.

Competition should then come about among the suppliers, which should make them more efficient, which in turn should bring down electricity rates.

The main "open access" was the main argument of the shadowy groups (i.e., the Napocor cronies) in their lobby for the Epira amendments.

You see, the Epira first down certain conditions in the power sector for the implementation of "open access."

Among them was that Napocor, the state-owned virtual monopoly, should reduce its control of the industry to at most 30 percent of the country's power generation capacity.

In this way, no single entity like Napocor (currently still controlling about 75 percent) can own power the others in the business.

But the shadowy Napocor cronies pushed for the idea that "open access" can be achieved only if the Napocor threshold is 50 percent.

The Dright idea only needed some amendments, the Lobs fought the idea, sold to her apparently by certain Cabinet members.

Not only that, the Lobs apparently got the impression that the Lopez group, because of their interest in Meralco, was against the "open access."

Now, nobody could fault these Cabinet members if they really believed in what they were feeding the President. Or maybe not.

***

IMPORTANTLY for found's way to implem study, even if Napocor the generation side of

And that way, Napo arise where there is c energy distribution— owners, since it still ha old of 30 percent.

The Lobs approved

And what was als look, too, it did not the Epira.

In business, you ca the Epira was create shadowy groups to t don of Napocor—her

That's why the ener strong criticism from as the foreign lobps ar

help in the foreclosed electricity in the Philippi electricity companies

In members inclu mmitt, Hidalo, Pulid hairman), Arnulfo Fu es, Ojeras, Leonardi 00), Isaias) and 1910 Ta

They assume that ev exports, employing a this hi tech manufactu

As for the BPC, or

Treasury sells 2.25M warrants worth $24.19M

By Michelle V Ramos

THE GOVERNMENT SOLD $24.19 MILLION worth of warrants that will cover $2.25 billion worth of euro- and dollar-denominated sovereign bonds to banned traders, the Bureau of the Treasury said yesterday.

There were a total of 2.25 million warrants sold, amounting to $10.75 each, the BTr said.

The warrants will serve as protection for holders of foreign-currency denominated bonds issued by the Philippine government. Each warrant covers $1,000 worth of bonds.

In case the government defaults on its foreign obligations, the warrants will allow investors to exchange their euro- or dollar-denominated bonds maturing in 2017 warrants with peso-denominated bonds that will mature in 2032.

Proceeds of the sale of the warrants will form part of the government's revenues stream for its expenditure requirements.

Bids submitted for the warrants during the auction on May 30 reached as much as $2.9 billion.

Credit Suisse served as the sole warrant manager.

Acting National Treasurer Roberto Tan said the sale of the warrants was not an indication of an intention to default on the government's foreign obligations, stressing that this was a remote possibility. The sale, he said, would help to make the Philippine capital structure more sophisticated by making available instruments for protection of bondholders.

Tan said countries more advanced than the Philippines had long been issuing warrants to their bondholders.

"The warrants will also help banks meet their derivative capital adequacy," Tan said earlier. The treasury official said banks that were paired with warrants carry zero risk rating for purposes of measuring capital adequacy ratio.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas requires banks to match their holdings of risky investment instruments with a certain amount of capital to ensure they can keep service their liabilities to the future.

The latest sale of warrants was the second this year. The first time was in February when the government sold $3.5 million worth of warrants covering $3 billion worth of dollar- and euro-denominated bonds.

Peso may

sell as households, s seem set being ove inflation. Nonetheless big system steered to

Most Asian curren to boats of US dollar

Non-GIR

country's ability to e requirements. It is p foreign currency ha cign investments ar from the Treasurer

Whatever the Lola wants

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bawal III

here in the Philippines, in letter to the Lola Dacuycuy letter last June 23 reiterated its position of NO amendment to the Epira.

The joint chamber is composed of American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines Inc., Australian-New Zealand Chamber of of the Philippines Inc., Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines Inc., European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines Inc., Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of the Philippines Inc., Multinational Companies Regional Headquarters Inc.

In short, they are the biggest investors in this country

All YOU know our beloved lawmakers were exerting all certain provisions in the Epira as-is-nojoke.

In its letter to the Lola, the JPC noted that those provisions were actually the providers in many other (and more progressive countries) in their power industries.

It went to say that amending Epira would only dampen confidence in investments in the power sector, which this country direly needs today, since the Visayas are already suffering from power shortages.

Now, need we tell Lauro? Sure! They want in the next three years!

NOW WHY do those shadowy groups want the Epira amended, thus allowing Napocor to keep control over the power industry?

Nobody knows. Not even our lawmakers!

But only last February, for instance, Napocor awarded a P328-million coal supply contract to a certain PT Hutamaha Mahan Nahkoan,"Basupanilo Consolidated Resources

That supposed company, it's really existed, was even invited by the Napocor bids and awards committee to join the bidding.

In Manila, the company's office was listed as the Dasmarinas Hotel Business Center in Quezon City.

The Dasmarinas Hotel said that its business center was not keen in operation at that time.

Info also went around business that this Basupanilo Consolidated Resources actually did not exist.

Lo and behold, the Napocor website showed that PT Hutamaha Mahkoan"Basupanilo Consolidated Resources bagged contracts worth P328 million.

Our sources at the SEC also noted that Basupanilo Consolidated Resources had no business registration ... until, of course, the SEC office in Cebu produced a registration document a week later.

You know, like magic!

stay at 43:$1 in '08

From page B1

Steve H. Lynch said. It added that the outlook for the US dollar would still be a recovery against other major global currencies.

"The US has stabilized since mid-April, although at a speed that suggested an excess of optimism," the report said. David C. Iluminin

forex stock down

From page B1

About 66 percent of the CBS is denominated in US dollars. About 8 percent is in euros, 2.3 percent in Japanese yen and the rest in other currencies. About $4 billion is in the form of gold reserves.

APEX MINING CO., INC.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

Please be informed that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of APEX MINING CO., INC. will be held on June 25, 2008 at 9:00 in the afternoon at Bulo Verde Country Club, Capt. Javier St., Bo. Ugong, Pasay City

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to order;
2. Proof of Notice and Determination of Existence of Quorum;
3. Approval of the Minutes of the Stockholders Meeting held on September 7, 2007;
4. Report of the President & CEO;
5. Presentation and approval of the Financial Statements as of December 31, 2007 embodied in the 2007 Annual Report;
6. Approval and Ratification of all actions of the Board of Directors and Management during the previous year;
7. Election of Directors;
8. Matters for Shareholders Approval;

Amendment to the Amended Articles of Incorporation and Amended Code of By-Laws modifying the number of directors from seven (7) to eight (8);

9. Appointment of External Auditor;
10. Other matters;
11. Adjournment.

The Board has fixed the close of business hours on May 30, 2008 as the record date for the determination of stockholders entitled to notice of meeting and to vote at the aforesaid shareholders' meeting.

By Order of the Board of Directors

(Sgd.) DAVID E. FUYAT
Corporate Secretary

(PDI, June 03, 2008)

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Posting of Invitation	June 1, 2000 - June 15, 2000
Issuance of Eligibility Forms	June 1, 2000 - June 15, 2000
Deadline for Submission of Eligibility Documents	June 1, 2000 - June 15, 2000
Deadline of Submission of Eligibility Documents and Accompanying Bid Documents	June 15, 2000 - 12:00 Noon
Opening of Bids	June 15, 2000
Post-Qualification, Evaluation, Negotiation and Award	June 15, 2000 - 5:00 PM

ATTY. ROBERTO M. ALMEDA
Head, Procurement

PNB sells stake in insurance firm

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK, THE BANKing unit of billionaire Andrew and alcohol magnate Lucio Tan, has agreed to sell its 40-percent stake in Manulife-PNB Life Insurance Co. Inc. (ManLife) to the majority co-owner.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, PNB said it had recently signed the memorandum of agreement to sell its minority stake to the Fernandez family's PNP Development Corp. and Sharp Trading.

In its letter to the PSE president Jesus Ishmael Ibn Saab could state about P700 million from the sale of its shares to the Fernandez family.

"The divestment will allow PNB to concentrate on its bancassurance businesses with PNB Life Insurance Inc.," bank corporate secretary Renato Fernandez said.

Majority owner gets 40% interest for P700 million

The transaction will consolidate the insurance investments of the Lucio Tan group in PNB Life Insurance Co., formerly Metro Tan Life (Metlife), which is controlled by allied Banking Corp.

Its corporate name has been changed to PNB Life.

PNB and Allied Bank, also owned by Lucio Tan, are expected to be merged before the end of the year.

While the life insurance business of the merged bank will be handled by PNB Life, the non-life insurance side will fall be owned through PNB General Insurers Co., Inc. (PNB Gen) and Allied Bankers Insurance Corp.

The sale to the Fernandez family was in accordance with an original agreement signed by PNB on July 15, 1996, when it acquired 40 percent of the company.

The said agreement typically give existing partners the right of first refusal or the priority option to buy the shares of other partners that want to unload their interest.

Meanwhile, the union between PNB and Allied Bank will give rise to the country's fourth biggest bank with combined resources of P106 billion, an improvement over PNB's current rank of sixth place.

The boards of PNB and Allied Bank recently approved a P8.1-billion merger deal through an exchange of shares targeted for closing in the third quarter.

The deal valued PNB at P46.6 billion and Allied Bank at P25.1billion.

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DOLE NCR Building, 997 Maligaya St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/ Citizenship	Position
CATALYST MICROFINANCE INVESTORS PHILIPPINES INC. 10/F Strata 2000 Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Mr. Rafiqul Islam	Team Member
CATALYST MICROFINANCE INVESTORS PHILIPPINES INC. 10/F Strata 2000 Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Ivan Mohammad Adnan	Team Member
CATALYST MICROFINANCE INVESTORS PHILIPPINES INC. 10/F Strata 2000 Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Mr. Faruk Ali	Team Member
CATALYST MICROFINANCE INVESTORS PHILIPPINES INC. 10/F Strata 2000 Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Sunil	Team Member
CATALYST MICROFINANCE INVESTORS PHILIPPINES INC. 10/F Strata 2000 Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Moin Chowdry Rubia Paul	Team Member
SUJIDU INC. 7101 Pioneer Bldg., Acacia Ave., BGC, Metro Manila, Mandaluyong City	Wan Hee Lee (wife of Kim)	Online Supervisor
HAIR MYSTIC CO. LTD. 82 Madrigal Comp., T.S. Harrison St., Pasay City	Youwen Shi	Export/Import Analyst
LITBANK, N.A. 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Supat Tulyabhorn Indonesian	Vice President of Oil Business Services - Asia
ZTE PHILIPPINES, INC. 10/F Petron Megaplaza Bldg., 358 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Fei Gong	Commercial Manager
ALPHERA CORP. 12th fl. Legaz Blvd., Ayala Triangle, Makati	Huaming Li	Sales Supervisor
ABBOTT'S HEALTHCARE PHILIPPINES, INC. 6772 Bldg., Garnitos cor. Gabriel St., Lopezan Village, Makati City	Yoshi Izawa	Country Chief Financial Officer
CHEMCENTER CORPORATION Alhambra St., San Cruz, Manila	Mengyi Shi	Sales Consultant
M.G.O. CORP. Marvex Drive, Bacolgoon, Davao City	Yikun Chen	Sales Consultant
SUNG MIN SUK CORP. 575-B Orlanda Ave., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Bokwon Kyeon (with Rim)	General Manager
HING LEE SEN MERE. INC. 10-C CTC Bldg., No. 499 Sto. Cristo St., Binondo, Manila	Jaimin Co	Operation Manager
VERSATILE WOUND MFG. CORP. 999 Furukawa St., Binondo, Manila	Ringchen Li	Consultant
VERSATILE WOUND MFG. CORP. 999 Furukawa St., Binondo, Manila	Lubin Chen	Supervisor
DONG WON INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANCY CORP. Unit 5, 4th Fl., Legazpi Towers 300, P. Ocampo St., Binondo, Manila	Jeong Suk An	Accounting Manager
WELL-BEING TOURS & TRAVEL CORP. Unit 205-B Marbella Manila Bldg. 2311 Roxas Blvd., Manila	Young Soo Kim	Manager
AJU KOREATOURS, INC. Unit 402 Eisenhower Condo., No. 11 Eisenhower St., Greenhills, San Juan City	Kwan Hee Byun (wife of Hee)	Consultant
KHABRA TRADING CO. 702 Sto. Monica Comp. I, Balintawak, Caloocan City	Sukhwinder Singh Gidar	Sales Representative
BEIJING TONG REN TANG PHIL. CORP. 2/F Zamora Bldg., 808 San, San Antonio, Pasay City	Qun Liu Chinese	Medical Consultant
CENTER FOR PHILIPPINE ARTS AND CULTURAL ENTERTAINMENT ASIN, INC. Manila Film Center, CCP Complex, Pasay City	Chorley Kang Korean	Consultant
18 ENTERTAINMENT INC. Burgundy Corp. Tower, Makati City	Hsiu Zheng Chinese	Sr. Marketing Manager
18 ENTERTAINMENT INC. Burgundy Corp. Tower, Makati City	Olivia Mao American	Sr. Business Development Manager
CASPO INCORPORATED 10/F PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Ave. cor. V.A Rufino, Makati City	Lowry Chee Yew Chong Malaysian	Operation Analyst
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BUSINESS

Napocor drafts conditions for flat rate offer

State firm heeds call to cut rates

By Abigail L. Ho

DIRECTED BY MALACAÑANG TO HELP CUT power rates, state-owned National Power Corp. has drafted conditions that will govern its offer of a flat rate of P4.11 a kilowatt-hour to Lopez-led Manila Electric Co., which at one time accounted for 75 percent of Meralco.

The country's largest private electric utility pays as much as P6.06 a kilowatt-hour for the electricity it buys from Napocor, primarily because it buys during peak hours.

To enjoy the flat rate, the Lopez-led firm should have a monthly average load factor of not less than 75 percent, according to the draft terms.

Also, Meralco should have an hourly demand during off-peak hours—or from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m.—of at least 1,400 megawatts.

If these two conditions are not met, Napocor's Energy Regulatory Commission's time-of-use (TOU) rates would be used in computing charges to Meralco.

In an earlier statement, Napocor said the P4.11-a-kWh rate that Dominic Macapagal-Arroyo mentioned in a May 2 speech was around the same rate it charges the rural electric cooperatives outside the Meralco franchise area, who get all of their power from Napocor.

Napocor said that even without Mr. Arroyo's directive of a flat rate, Meralco could already lower its rates by taking advantage of the state firm's TOU rates.

"It all depends on Meralco's purchasing mix. Since end-consumers cannot directly avail themselves of Napocor's TOU rates, Meralco can optimize its benefits by adjusting the level of electricity it buys from its various sources," the state firm said.

"It can opt to improve its load patterns from Napocor by also buying from it electricity during off-peak [hours], when power rates are very low and not only during peak hours when electricity rates are quite high," it added.

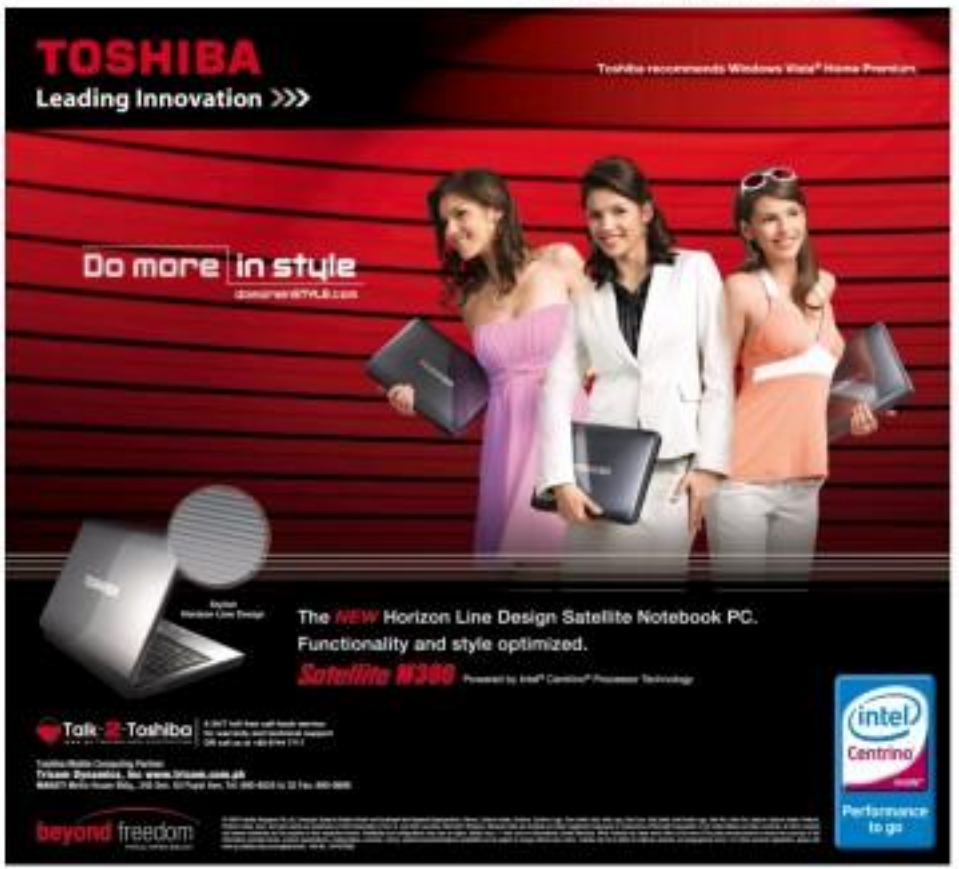
The state firm said Meralco's changing its purchasing mix would have more immediate benefits to consumers, as compared with Napocor having to file with the ERC a separate application that would allow it to charge a flat rate specifically designed for the distribution utility.

Napocor president Cyril Del Callar also admitted during last week's power stakeholders' meeting at the Department of Energy that offering that flat rate to Meralco could mean losses to the state firm.

He did not elaborate on how much, however, saying only that the state firm already made its calculations.

For Meralco's part, utility economists David Erasmo Dela Peña said the P4.11-per-kWh flat rate would really reduce Meralco's rates to its customers, assuming that the same volume of power—or around 40 percent—would be sourced from Napocor.

"We'll still have to see installment on how that will affect our rates. But if there will be no changes in volume, then it will be a reduction," he said.



HAVE A GOOD DAY!

Style, chic and panache are all acquirable but class, my dear, is non-negotiable.
—Sir Cecil Beaton, photographer and writer

LIFESTYLE
Editor: Victoria Sicangco-San Juan

PLASMIN
BLOOD CLOT DISSOLVER
(WAS STROKE)?

3 siblings face the challenge of dragon boat racing

By Ricky Pascuero
Contributor

TWO SISTERS, CANDY CORDERO AND Crystal Perez de Tagle, the current of how Boracay springs forth new discoveries in people would certainly depend on their openness to continue their own personal limits.

Having taken up the challenging sport of dragon boat racing in Boracay four years ago, Candy, Corinne and Crystal now come up with convincing declarations on the subtle intricacies of the body to the power of the mind and brainwaves of the spirit.

"Yes, to you he doesn't. And the experiences can be exhilarating," they boom. All three have manifested their ability to rest in competition with powerful dragon boat teams even though they started training for it in what is traditionally referred to as advanced age.

"I never thought I would get into this strenuous sport or any sport for that matter," exclaims Candy, mother of three children, Gracien, 22, and Clarent and Lei, who are now in their 30s.

Candy is a former International School teacher who owns Island Resort in Mainland Beach.

Corinne, the first of the sisters who joined the Bagyan Boracay dragon boat team, says their story is largely about conquering their fear of the unknown.

A psychotherapist who sought semi-retirement in the island four years ago after living for 24 years in the US, Corinne worked with the Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic and Long Beach Child Guidance Clinic.

Upon learning that there was a good school for her then 13-year-old son, she settled in Boracay upon the invitation of Candy.

Crystal, 52 at the time, set up her health food store named Don't Panic, It's Organic, made new friends and got caught up with rowing buffs. Soon, she inspired Candy and Corinne to take up rowing.

Crystal came to Isla last stint in Boracay at age 44, after Corinne decided to live on the island. Since her younger years, Crystal has been a gym buff. And she's now part of Bagyan Boracay which has reaped several prizes in national and international races held in Boracay and Hong Kong.

Being in a team sport, where everyone supports competition by providing the widest collaborative and motivational environment, Candy somehow found the courage to improve her performance alongside others.

She explains that since the Boracay group does not yet have a modern boat specifically for those who are 40 and above, women in her age bracket are fielded in races with the younger set.

With one year in the team intent on winning, the previous era moves high and crying beats the other pines. "At the moment I'm the weakest link," Candy says.

SISTERS. Candy, Corinne and Crystal Perez de Tagle

Humbling experience

Being in a team with younger and more able-bodied members, she says she had some many humbling experiences. "There had been times when I trained so much to be chosen by the coach to row in outrigger only to be told on the day of competition that I can't row in those of others who are injured experience better."

But this does not discourage her. Candy's enthusiasm for the sport spills over to letting the world know how positive Boracay is for dragon boat rowing and other water sports. She is one of the prime movers behind Boracay Island Paddler's Association (Bipa), which has brought Boracay to the limelight as an international race venue.

With the energies of other power ladies in the island, Boracay Gold, Tourism Foundation, and Yaki Pilit, Bipa has inspired Boracay to bigger and better races, to the delight of all its paddlers and Mexico Region of the Dragon Boat Federation.

The sisters' goal now is to want a success team for Boracay. When formed, they can continue rowing to the pace fit for their age bracket.

At the 2nd Fils International Boracay Dragon Boat Festival last May, which attracted some 1,000 rowers around the world, Candy rowed with the Dragon Heroines mixed team from Australia.

For Candy, it was a "perfect fit" as she also enjoyed the experience of meeting again friends she had made in previous tournaments.

Dragon boat is also turning out to be a great social event for the ladies. Earlier, Corinne and Candy took a friend's offer to visit him in Italy. There, Candy shares, they rowed together on Rancchian Lake in Rome where Tom Cruise married Katie Holmes.

Training regimen

Months before major competitions, a training regimen includes waking up at 4:30 a.m. and jogging on the beach to get to their assembly area by 6 a.m. for stretches. At 7 a.m., they eat breakfast. Rowing is from 8:30 a.m. Another batch of workouts takes place in the afternoon starting with stretching exercises at 3 p.m. Rowing is from 3:30-5:30 p.m.

"It certainly looks like I'm hooked on rowing," confesses Corinne.

Though she left Boracay last year to reassume residence in the US to be with her son as he continues his studies there, Corinne simply felt she urgent to come back for the event this year. Corinne returned to the island two days after the rowing festival and was awarded a trophy.

She says she tried the Charleston area in the US and succeeded twice in Newport Beach in Los Angeles. But she now gets to keep fit in the US nobody through rowing.

In fact, the adult, she just can't see feel half marathons in Los Vegas and will try to keep on raising the bar. "While rowing, I learned that it's never too late to try something new and be passionate with."

A LITH

BY JED ALBANIA

TULOOK

BY PAPU AND TATOY HILAMBELING

PUSAKO BAGOOY

BY ERIK JUNIOR

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

KARIN BUBBLE

BY JENNY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBBY

BY VERA SARCILLANO

LONGSHOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHONGOLO

KIKO MACHINE

BY FRANZ ABRERA

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORDS

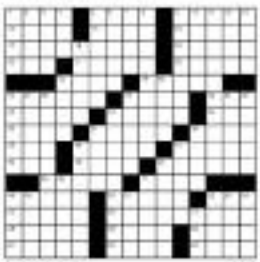
ACROSS

1 What follows football
4 Hanging hormone
9 Deer, in Paris
14 Peasant dress
15 Part of this bird
16 Pounded into submission
17 Don't leave for home, like a
18 Money in Mexico
19 Like a lot
21 Doubled time
22 Collection
23 Point of speech
24 ___ sanctum
25 Adam's knee
26 Of many models
28 No ___ nor buts
29 Armadillo
33 Adrenaline inducing
37 Period
38 Intro for Otis
39 Venetian blinder
40 Film folks
41 Been ___ (regularly)
45 Work by Virgil
46 Fabric measure
47 ___ down (dress)
48 Ada Chase letter
49 Out of the game
50 Leaches
51 Insult
55 Babushka
56 Nanny the
57 Poetry partner
58 Proverbial adages
60 Don't spare me, bro
62 Air vases
63 Indirect maintenance
65 Cuisine crossword
67 Ms. Waller
68 Lyricist
69 Tattoo in one line

DOWN

1 Go angling
2 Apologetic rejection cry
3 Kind of IRA
4 Cleanness, in Arles
5 Exit
6 Hallways letters
7 Head Quotey
8 Darken
9 Memorize
10 Loaves
11 Appealing to the opposite sex
12 Stolen
13 Complacement
14 Part of no room
20 Peasant
24 Jam and wax
26 Wrong
27 Old cattle ax
28 Hindi language in the Indies
30 Man of Lo Monaco
31 Clairvoyant's globe
32 Cast in ___ (ensnared)
34 Co-coordinator
35 Amount
36 Old kind of hardware
41 Heavens
42 Cleaved of snow
43 Loose, over-giddy
44 Vista
46 Classic Western, for one
48 Handle someone
51 Lion
52 Adam's address
53 Humorous Rogers
54 Catch a glimpse of
57 Party mood study/videos

By Mitchell Weinberg
San Francisco, CA



HOROSCOPE

THIS WEEK TODAY Your confidence and energy could be at their highest level in months. Your ability to get what you want is at its peak. Use this to your advantage. Be sure to ask for what you want and express your feelings openly. Don't be afraid to show yourself to be the person you really are. Your true colors are beautiful. Don't hide them. Let them shine!

SYMBOLS ♈ Aries ♉ Taurus ♊ Gemini ♋ Cancer ♌ Leo ♍ Virgo ♎ Libra ♏ Scorpio ♐ Sagittarius ♑ Capricorn ♒ Aquarius ♓ Pisces

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) This is the best time of year for you to make career moves. Be open to new possibilities, even unconventional ones. Others may be threatened by your confidence. Try to show your colleagues that you're not a threat.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You're more creative than usual. Don't be afraid to express yourself. Others may not understand your ideas, but you must stay true to your vision. It's a good time to think about your next move, but don't rush into action. Wait for the perfect opportunity.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) This is a time for you to take a look at your life and make some changes. Be sure to include your friends in your plans. They can help you in more ways than you realize. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You're in a good position to make a career move. Be sure to do your research before you commit. This is the time to take a risk, but don't be reckless. Be sure to have a backup plan in case things don't work out.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) This is a good time to start a new project. Be sure to include your friends in your plans. They can help you in more ways than you realize. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) This is a time for you to make some changes. Be sure to include your friends in your plans. They can help you in more ways than you realize. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) This is a time for you to make some changes. Be sure to include your friends in your plans. They can help you in more ways than you realize. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) You're in a good position to make a career move. Be sure to do your research before you commit. This is the time to take a risk, but don't be reckless. Be sure to have a backup plan in case things don't work out.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) This is a time for you to make some changes. Be sure to include your friends in your plans. They can help you in more ways than you realize. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) This is a time for you to make some changes. Be sure to include your friends in your plans. They can help you in more ways than you realize. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) You're in a good position to make a career move. Be sure to do your research before you commit. This is the time to take a risk, but don't be reckless. Be sure to have a backup plan in case things don't work out.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) This is a time for you to make some changes. Be sure to include your friends in your plans. They can help you in more ways than you realize. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Concepts Sudoku By Dave Green

	3		8	6	1		2	
4								1
				7				
9			1		3			4
7		5				9		3
2			7		6			8
				1				
1								7
	9		4	2	7		3	

Difficulty Level: ★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	6	3	9	7	2	8	4	5
9	8	7	5	4	6	3	2	1
4	5	2	3	8	1	6	7	9
2	4	9	8	1	7	5	3	6
6	3	8	4	2	5	9	1	7
7	1	5	6	3	9	2	8	4
3	2	6	1	9	4	7	5	8
8	9	1	7	5	3	4	6	2
5	7	4	2	8	8	1	9	3

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Stages of successful weight loss

Part 2

By Mitch Fulgo
Contributor

I WILL RELATE TWO CASES and how these people managed to change their lifestyle.

Going from successive acceptance to lifestyle change stage. Ms Minel Ang has lost 50 pounds since 2002. The past three years, she never went through the ambivalent stage of weight control where one would resort to quick fixes just to lose remaining pounds. She is still working on her last 10-15 pounds.

She went through a lot of unexpected circumstances last year which made it difficult for her to lose weight quickly. But Pia is always ready to manage her lifestyle. She believes weight management is a life-long commitment.

Monitor food intake and exercise. Pia can easily overcome frustrations because she keeps a journal. She's always aware of her food intake and exercise.

LEFT: Bernadette Buttao at 115 lbs. Now she weighs 110 lbs.

On the goal-oriented and challenging activities. Pia enjoys challenging physical activities like running (the sixth leg to improve (she already finished two full marathons). She is also surrounded with positive-minded people.

Three fine of success in lifestyle change: Bernadette Buttao has lost 20 lbs since 2006, but admits she's still trying her best to reach the lifestyle change stage.

Ask help when you realize you can't do it alone. Bardo decided to ask for our help last year to identify the best action plan to reach her goal weight. I have witnessed her enthusiasm over her weekly goals. She reached her ideal weight of 110 pounds at the end of last year.

Know what you really want and set your goals. It came to a point where some of Bardo friends would comment on her amazing slim appearance. Their reactions affected Bardo and made her decide to gain some weight.

She then reached the first of success stage where she'd submerge her healthy behavior to avoid losing weight. She realizes now she knows what she wants and will again try to reach her ideal weight and maintain it.

Undoubtly improve other aspects of your life. At the start of this post, she finally stopped smoking to improve her running performances. It's common for those who quit smoking to resort to food as a way of coping. Bardo realized somewhere, a person needs to fix other aspects of his/her lifestyle first.

Lifestyle change

The hardest stage to reach is the lifestyle change where your activities become almost mechanical, just like combing your hair or brushing your teeth.

Adm. Ice Sudanon: I have never been overweight but admittedly experienced the honeymoon stage of weight control where I momentarily worked out and watched what I ate religiously so that I could get my goal for percentage. It came to a point where I realized I was doing too much and it affected my life balance. I then strived to attain moderation in all aspects of life.

Keep on learning. I finally thought of taking a break for a while and educated myself about lifestyle management and long-term weight control. I believe awareness, understanding and experience can lead you to the final stage. It took me almost three years to reach it.

Enjoy eating and keep on moving. Eat what you want, but in controlled portions especially if the food is high calorie. Continue making a journal so that you know how you are maintaining your weight.

E-mail the author at mitchfulgo@gmail.com

Look good, feel great

NEVER BEFORE HAVE WE BEEN placed in a more privileged position than now, considering the ever-widening choices available to look better and feel fine.

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Here's how

Mind set. Stop groan your thinking. Beginning today, remove the word "aging" from your vocabulary. Replace it with "ripening" or "maturing." "Slowaging"—whatever opposite to you.

Dr. Deepak Chopra in his book Ageless Body, Timeless Mind" explains that what you believe, you will become. So affirm this now: "I am young forever."

Up your metabolism. Even if you feel it takes more effort to exercise, then do double time or the gym. Your body will need fewer calories as time passes. Start any form of exercise. Its as long as it's regular and repeated, it will only do your health good. The best news is the more you exercise, the younger you will look—as long as you don't do it under the sun.

Avoid the sun as much as possible. Ha. That is a golden rule. Take in only the early morning sun—anytime till 7:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. to sunset. The earth's ozone layer is thinning and this means less protection from the damaging ultraviolet rays that have some dramatic effect on the skin—wrinkling.

Believe in green. The greener and fresher, the fruits and nuts, the higher the enzyme factor in your diet. In short, live enzymes equals a younger you. Discover the power of juicing. Try these combinations: cucumber-green apple, romaine lettuce/carrot/ red apple; veggie beets/carrot/cilantro. Watch your skin glow with each passing day.

Carrot rub

Leftover fiber from juiced carrots mixed with ¼ cup of fresh milk can make a great facial mask and body rub. This will moisthen and soften your skin. Rub everywhere. And have fun in the process.

Stay centered

A calm and focused mind can affect you in a positive way. Your mind speaks to every cell of your body. Therefore, if you are constantly stressed, it will affect on your skin.

Find time to meditate. Or, at least, play your favorites. You owe it to yourself to shut out the noise, hassle and pressure of the world even if it is only 10-20 minutes a day.

If meditation is medicine for the mind, then regular meditation will give you a natural tranquil and emotional high—one that will visibly show on your face.

Be happy

Know life is as it should be but it will give you more if your expect more. So, tell yourself: "I deserve the best and the best is yet to come."

Love and light!

Can the future be seen?

THERE'S AN INTRIGUING QUESTION from a female reader who calls herself Alpha, regarding the nature of time and seeing the future.

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime T. Licauco

"Let's say everything from 2005 to the present has already happened, as well as the future. Then, we are just repeating things that happened before.

"If that is the case, then the coming events ultimately took place. I mean on the level of time, can help a person see the coming events, since they are considered merely a repetition of the past. If not, how is it possible to see future events?"

Wow, as we know it, exists only in our three-dimensional world of physical reality. Actually, time does not exist in the mental and, specially, in the spiritual planes.

To define time in almost an impossible task. The usual division of time into past, present and future is merely a convenient metaphor for us to rationally or logically function in this physical world.

In actuality there is no such thing. There is only the eternal now.

That is why there is some truth to the saying that, "The future is now!"

The past is forever gone, and due to cannot yet to be.

The present

But in reality, what we consider to be a future event in the physical world is actually the present in the spiritual or metaphysical world. Because before something appears on the physical plane, it must first appear on the mental and spiritual planes.

According to some modern physicists, time travel is theoretically possible. And if man can invent a machine that can travel at the speed of light, which is 186,000 miles per second, then this can become a physical reality.

The next question is: If the future can be seen, are accident or impending danger, can it be prevented?

The answer is: Sometimes yes, at other times, no.

What causes the difference one way or the other? A future event can be prevented if not all the elements for its completion are present.

For example, if it requires the will of man to complete the event, it can still be prevented. However, if all the elements are completed so that lights or sound pulses, nothing can be done to prevent it from happening on the physical plane. In other words, we live in a predetermined reality.

Negative vibes

Another reader asks if negative thoughts and feelings after physical form or becomes tangible "even in the absence of the negative person?"

"My family," she continued, "went through an emotional strain the last few years. It involved many. In my two sisters who lived with my parents. My elder sister stayed in the room where I felt strong negative vibes when I entered the place. Her crazy anger and all other pent-up emotions have become so tangible that they fill the room with negative vibes. Is this possible?"

Yes, because the feelings expressed by one person especially of strong negative nature are imprinted in the akashic record of that place which can be felt by a sensitive person. A sensitive person may not feel those negative vibes but will still affect him or her.

To remove negative emotions, light an incense or candle, or sound the tibetan bells in the room. You may also leave clear quartz crystals in the room to somehow neutralize the negative energies.

The next Seminars, Karma & Reincarnation seminar will be on June 14, 7-9 p.m. Call 8047041, 8926886; for $1100BC e-mail inner.awareness_2007@yahoo.com.

MEDICard. The Heightened Experience!
Take Charge Doc!
By: Dr. Sharon Lagaya
How can a woman prevent Cervical Cancer?
Cervical cancer is the 3rd most frequent malignancy of the lower genital tract, after uterine and ovarian cancer. Highest incidence occurs in women 40-60 years old. Usually, the symptoms of cervical cancer are vaginal bleeding after sexual intercourse, in-between menses, after menopause, abnormal vaginal discharge, pain during sexual intercourse or an early age are also at risk. Other potential factors for having cervical cancer include the use of oral contraceptive pills, cigarette smoking, stressful activities, unprotected sexual intercourse, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). It is usually transmitted

Union of 2 brilliant, gorgeous individuals

ANJAN Vaz
Governor Billie Calleo

REYES Hair Co.-Int'l, Inc. president Edna Muzio Reyes and Edd Reyes

TANIA Montes and Quasi de la Paz

LES REYES, Reyes Hair Co.-Int'l, Inc. chair and executive officer; Philip Cu-Unjieng, Tootie Quintero; (seated) Elydel Mercado and Francine Prieto

ED PRODUCT manager Portia Garcia, ED senior VP-general manager Tony Pascua and ED assistant VP-operations Albert Suengo

GLOBE Strategic president Ophie Lee and NCBC's Uy Chee Ding

ED PRESIDENT Rubert Jose Castillo, Globe Asiatique project director-vice president for operations Juanito Quagmire and Tegaide Associates president Billy Tegaide

SQUIRE'S Pio-Jo Villa and action DJ Puerto Tee

PATRICIA Cordero and CJ Uy Cabrafilla

TOP-TIER Quintero, Reyes Hairconvers franchising head Jason Bahajo and Elydel Mercado

REYES Hairconvers Boracay's Ella Dimalanta, Pia Gaston and Sea Village's Emee Robles

PHPHI franchising director Roy Aguas (2nd left) with Sun's PHPHI promotions supervisor Angela de Vera, Marlboro brand manager Eric Canonizado and wife Lia

ANDREW Wolff and Mitch Villaverde

CARLOS Cantos and Cocoy Tee

FROM left, clockwise: Paulene Quano and Jerry Yenko; Will Kim and Charmaine Palermo; PHPHI promotions supervisor Rona Dino and Dong Yoksan, concierge at Oj Hin; and Marlboro account brand manager John Ingcoal

YOUNG VOTER ACHIEVER Deborah Ann "Quasi" Cordova de la Paz IV and rock-ola-catching beauty Antonia Maria "Tania" de Leon Montes are all set for their big day on Dec. 15 in breezy Caticlan, Boracay, Aklan. Their reception will take place at the Montes' gorgeous sprawling seafront home, Pillars Beach. The bride's gown will be created by a close friend and principal sponsor, internationally renowned Jude C. Samar, no less, dahling.

Quasi, a vibrantly likeable, good-looking and born boy scout from and raised in Bacolod City. The eldest son of **Jun de la Paz III** and **Sylvia Cordova de la Paz**, Quasi is a graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University and is currently working as a digital services director at McCann World Group's MRM Worldwide.

The absolutely stunning, eye-catching Tania is the youngest daughter of business magnate **Raymund Montes** and popular presidio **Misty Ponce de Leon**. Tania spent four years working in the advertising industry both in the Philippines and the United States. She has been living in New York for the last two years now, but has decided to move back home to chip into the next chapter of her fantastic life.

Quasi proposed to Tania during a romantic spring break in New York's Central Park in April 2007, yabang pa.

Hairconvers now in blooming Boracay

Hot-hot June Mi-summ-er month in this part of the country. So fun! If not mas nakà.

Heavy, we have another must-visit establishment in this paradise island (which is getting less of a paradise!)...a full-service salon. It's an establishment known and locals of the island have been wanting for.

Reyes Hairconvers Salon was unveiled at a cocktail party. Flying over to Boro for the happening: dahlings, some Vice Governor Billie Calleo movie and TV personalities Tess-Tess Gutierrez and Elydel Mercado; gorgeous actress and TV personality Francine Prieto with her cinnamon-brandy sweet, adorable baby; Philip Cu-Unjieng - Reyes Hair Co. International Inc. president Edna Muzio Reyes, their son and chief executive officer Les Reyes; and Rev. Fr. Michael Bordallo. They all couldn't get enough of the excellently prepared bulalo spread by the popular Boat Philippe Garand Resort.

Did you know that Reyes Hairconvers has received tons of awards in the prestigious Franchise Excellence Awards organized by the Philippine Franchise Association? Reyes Hairconvers is now a Hall of Fame awardee in the Outstanding Filipino Franchise of the Year category, yalangan. Well, now you know.

Check out Reyes Hairconvers while in the island if you get too much sun and need to tone your hair at Le Soleil Apartments, Main Road, Boracay.

Marlboro Red Night

Boracay sun is red-hot sizzler, dahlings, when Marlboro land a beachfront banquet for groupies, friends leaders and smokers for two sizzling days, yalangan.

An after-dive Marlboro smoking lounge at Hawaiki's beloved bistro, coolest little nook and black pillows plus smooth tuckahoe Marlboro-branded smokies, in three red hot blacks, welcomed any-brand smokers to the Red Night bash that drew the biggest risk-crowd, dahlings.

The clown is got to make night, and noticed the crowd was a bit quiet – and the after-dive nightlife just proper. DJ Tony Parks provided the upbeat sound. Host was international DJ Marco Cesar – to rule-rousted up the boat to boiling point with exotic hits and disco favorites. But what, two-time winner of the Asian Model Awards 2006 **Kristine Hermosilla** hit the booth, all tall broke-loose dahlings. The mob stayed on, dancing under the clear blue skies until the wee hours of the morning. Would you believe, one jumped into a bicycle and headed to bed. Dubai time, you could not be more fabulous.

We hope that Marlboro Red Night will become a new summer tradition, yalangan. Hey, it never get better than that!

G.A. Tower II controversy

Latest it is the controversy Globe Asiatique Realty Holdings Corp. and Big Big Facade, who joined forces for a second high-rise, 5-star condominium project, the G.A. Tower II, yalangan. After the enormous success of G.A. Tower I, Globe Asiatique continues to provide affordability to middle-income earners. The topping-off ceremony announced that "the condominium is now ready for Residency."

G.A. Tower II features 689 residential units and 18 penthouse suites, all fully furnished. Owners can choose from either a two- or three-bedroom unit. That includes two toilet and bath areas, kitchen, dining and living areas, a loft, plus a balcony of two picnic-able amenities. And best of all, yalangan, commuting will be convenient since it's located at the heart of Edsa, Mandaluyong, near the first MRT station.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Mia Magno using **NIKON** Photo Solutions

The colorful ceremony was attended by the engineers, architects and managing staff of G.A. Tower II, all shakers while Globe Asiatique brilliant, member president, Mr. Chee-ann Ismael Dell'Acqua, says, "This project gave student responsibility because they have assured financing from Pag-Ibig. The beauty is we are located on the bus routes, the end users who relate to living decent lifestyle living enough luxuriating projects that address the needs of middle-income Filipinos."

Pag-Ibig members and nonmembers alike can apply for the loan. For more info, visit www.gabiztech.com or call 7474777.

HANK Saratoga, Hey! Jude's John Lee, Bond Jacob and son Sandrino JM Rodriguez

PHPHI promotions supervisor Angela de Vera, PHPHI promotions manager Lyn Edrosolan, Junior Cadillac and Hey! Jude's first lady, adorable Louise Lee

ANDREA Aguilar, Jasmine Tee, Jen Flores and Eileen Magsino

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bernie S. Velarde

"SINGING Bee" is cracking for its extremely varied song choices—from Sinatra to Vicoy Villena, plus

Gabo too cute for his age Dollywood/D4

'Lyric-recall' shows compared

VEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS "50 Kia K-The P1 Million Videoke Challenge." When it first started telecasting years ago, the GMA-7 show impressed us because it came across as an "only in the Philippines" phenomenon: The pioneering "lyric recall" quiz show was an early night for Filipinos, who love music and singing with a profi pinoy passion.

Since then, two other shows originating exclusively to remember the lyrics of a wide range of songs have hit the TV screen: "Don't Forget the Lyrics" is an interactive show that's scheduled to go on cable TV here (Velvet Channel, Saturday, 8:30 p.m.) and is also yours.

And the latest show with a similar format to debut on Philippine TV is "The Singing Bee," which is also your weeknights on Channel 2.

How do these three "lyric-recall" programs shape up in comparison to each other? First of all, we continue to admire GMA-7's "K" for pioneering in this unusual quiz format. However, we must note that, through the years, the show has added so many gimmicks that it

feels too fussy and forced today.

For its part, "Don't Forget the Lyrics" is comparatively more all of a piece. It's also unlike the other two shows, because it features only one contestant at a time.

And, thus far, all of the solo contestants we've seen on the program have been outstanding singers.

There is a big improvement over "K" and "The Singing Bee," which often acquire lyric-recall wannabes—from Sinatra to Vicoy Villanueva—just because they're celebrity-fixated in the production's

attributes when it comes to accuracy—one wrong syllable, and the lyric is deemed incorrect.

But, we are thrown off by some of the show's contestants' lack of real singing talent. And by the fact that some clueless contestants try to fi some flaws outshine by making fun of them. It would really be better for the show if it screened shots of clueless round-ins and sing starlets and sought out real experts at lyric-recall, instead.

All told, therefore, the best lyric-recall show on the radio, in our estimation, is "Don't Forget the Lyrics." (By the way, a PS: Are we more old [and] well on the program, we're using something like $1,000,000...and she would sing, too!)

The movies they're making

It's been a full decade after the last "X-Files" film—and its years ri on the hit TV show went off the air, to it's high time for another "X-Files" movie. "I Want To Believe," done again, Mulder (David Duchovny) and Scully (Gillian An-

LYRIC-RECALL C3

OPENS TOMORROW
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Ultrashape has been tested and proven effective. In fact, many men are amazed with how this treatment has helped them lose their gut and made them look, feel and live better!

Ultrashape is available at Marie France FOR MEN. Plains for a NO-COST body-fat analysis. All consultations are carried out in private. Call 813-7959 now and get a flatter tummy in no time!

Lyric-recall' shows compared

By Ambeth R. Ocampo

Actress Jennifer Aniston had to watch a storytelling rom—this time around, however, there is no obvious conspiracy theories. The case is out there...but not out of this world. Click Carter directs.

* * *

The Wachowski brothers were so happy with Keanu Reeves' previous kinetic performance in their cynical film, "Speed Racer," that they've offered him an even bigger role in their next movie, "Ninja Assassin," which James McTeigue is helming.

The martial arts action-suspense story flows as a man brought up by assassin-espionage that secretly kill for a living to "train" the sons his bank on (needless to make his way to the modern world, only to come into conflict with a ninja (Rob Yune) from the clan.

* * *

In "Made of Honor," Tom Bamford (Patrick Dempsey) has come to realize that he loves his best friend, Hannah (Michelle Monaghan), and decides to ask her to marry him. Before he can pop the question, however, the Bamfords with the stunning announcement that she's signed to marry somebody else.

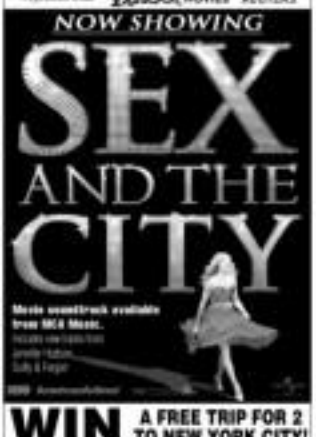
So bad luck would have it, he later out to be Colin, a very wealthy Scotsman. So, Tom has his work cut out for him to either get the intended angel, whose he's agreed to be his best friend's "maid of honor."

"BEST DATE MOVIE THIS SUMMER!"
—Paul Gregutis/Hollywood / TIME Magazine

"Sex and the City," is the movie that fans are most excited about heading into Hollywood's key summer season.

Thu May 1, 2008 11:00am EDT By Bob Tourtellotte

As the poll of nearly 400,000 respondents, "Sex and the City" proved most exciting to 22 percent of the movie fans, compared with 21 percent for "Indiana Jones."
—reprinted from YAHOO! MOVIES REUTERS



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AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 SEX & THE CITY	2 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	3 CAREGIVER	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL
GLORIETTA 4	1 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	2 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	3 SEX & THE CITY	
	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	5 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	6 CAREGIVER	7 21
GREENBELT 1	1 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL		2 SEX & THE CITY	
GREENBELT 2	1 SEX & THE CITY		2 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	
	3 21	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	5 SEX & THE CITY	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 SEX & THE CITY		2 CAREGIVER	
	3 21	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	5 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 SEX & THE CITY	2 CAREGIVER	3 21	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL
MARKET! MARKET!	1 CAREGIVER		2 SEX & THE CITY	
	3 21	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	5 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	
TRINOMA	1 CAREGIVER	2 21	3 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL
	5 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	6 SEX & THE CITY	7 SEX & THE CITY	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — Trompete Playshop Workshop; April 2 - June 2, Glorietta Homecome. For inquiries, pls. call Rina Regard at 7526507

Greenbelt — APRIL-BRAZIL Art Workroom at Greenbelt with movement, music and makeshoppers. May 31, 7 PM, Greenbelt 3, 2nd level.

Alabang Town Center — Summer Workshop; Silver Opera Classes. May 19 – June 7, 2 PM, Spanish and Robbins Theatre

Ayala Center Cebu — Park and Shop Promo. May 12-31

Market! Market! — Asian Tropical Living: An Interior Design Exhibit. March – June 30, Home Market, 3rd Level

Cristalino — GRETADO - The perfect spot for concerts, stagehops & corporate events is now accepting bookings for May to July 2008. For inquiries & bookings, pls. call 750-7662 or 757-3497.

Ayala Museum — Paintings by 19th Century artist Simon Flores ongoing until May 04, 2008. For more information, please call 757-7117 loc 27 or email museum_hope@yahoo.com

Tri Noma — Philippine Star Job Fair. May 04-31, 10 AM - 9 PM, Activity Center

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NOVALICHES

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2 INDIANA JONES
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PIONEER

1 21
2 INDIANA JONES
3 CARE GIVER
4 SEX AND THE CITY

STA. ROSA

1 INDIANA JONES
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3 THE POSSESSED
4 CARE GIVER

LIPA

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3 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS
4 CARE GIVER / IRON MAN

DASMARINAS

1 THE POSSESSED
2 INDIANA JONES
3 21
4 CARE GIVER

IMUS

1 CARE GIVER
2 IRON MAN
3 INDIANA JONES
4 21

ANGELES

1 INDIANA JONES
2 CARE GIVER
3 ASYLUM
4 21

STARMILLS

1 21
2 CARE GIVER
3 MEGA MAKE
4 RAW PA RIN / INDIANA JONES
5 CARE GIVER
6 INDIANA JONES

BACOLOD

1 CARE GIVER
2 INDIANA JONES
3 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS / CARE GIVER
4 21
5 ASYLUM
6 THE SAVAGES

ILOILO

1 INDIANA JONES
2 CARE GIVER
3 IRON MAN / CARE GIVER
4 21
5 PATHOLOGY
6 NEVER BACK DOWN

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Gabo is guilty... of being too cute for his age

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

The actor is really a magnet for controversy

GABBY CONCEPCION IS REALLY A CONTROVERSY magnet. The makers of the skin enhancer Lucida GD, which he uses, which the actor endorses, are planning to sue a broadcaster for her alleged erroneous reports about the product. Ashley Bristol is facing bigamy charges and other lawsuits. Yet, Ah-Yi Gabo is guilty of being too cute for his age!

Bida Mae at 29

Bida Mae Quinto has no qualms admitting that she's already 29. She neither looks nor feels her age anyway.

Lorraine she hosted at the hosted event noticed "Bida is naturally, there are no wrinkles. Update and upgrade," she says. "Bawat isang month sa resident. Never ko'y hinipo. Guess you'll never know when they're needed." Ciao a mia via Bodot

Family first

Even if **Sandy Goncalves** rents more than enough to live on her own, she'd rather not move out of the family home.

This is keeping relationship as family to," she

GABBY Concepcion during a recent visit to Singapore.

admits. The new face of Bida Essentials may be financially independent, but she still depends on her family for emotional support.

While her Bida star-studded glow can't have a queue of admirers, "Pretty every medicines for PR" she says. Shrinking. When hosting mom **Johnny Lloyd Cruz** weren't taken yet, she said, she wouldn't mind falling for him despite their age difference. "Sana pwede na lang siya ang akuin," she jokes. Copy that, Lizelle?

Pinoys in Cannes

Aside from the Philippine entry "Invitro" to the 61st Cannes Film Fest, there was another Pinoy presence on the sixty-some. Besides a local magazine, was given accreditation to cover the festival. The song, whose publication are between actor **Cris Villanueva** and his wife **Zhan**, were included as recipients of Cannes fest bags. So much for bagging the Palme d'Or.

Marian's 'tawag' videos

Maalaala Mamasa has told the story behind the story of her pagtawag-tawag in Wedding. All is well between her and the man she linked in for taking unauthorized footage of her show that another video is now circulating. This time it's Marian with a make-up artist whom she threw away off your (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdvI_fb-hGY&feature=related).

Her previous video was last a version was

Deadly attitude

Dance who this actress is. She was transferred all the way from Baguio and brought her own home-made deliveries. She thanked them profusely. But as soon as they left the studio, she hollered to her aiding. Hays ano ngayon ako? Ang sagot pagbigay ng Bida magkanin yan!"

Deadly attitude is match her drop-dead gorgeous looks!

As-orig, at last

Dance who this actress is. She was accompanied to interview a real Maltese hog from a generous colleague. "Lahat ng D' to Gabo. Sobrang mga orig na ako ako!" she gasped. Bike it so you'll find like you've made it?

'Secret jewel'

Not to name people know that **Mark-anil Gutierrez** really known. Not only second the kitchen. Al-Gloria All Purpose Screening. Me couldn't have picked a better audience. It's the Diamond Star's 'secret jewel' in all her dishes.

E-mail: [illegible]
[illegible]@yahoo.com